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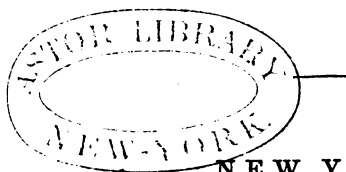
LIFE OF FAITH.

THE
LIFE OF FAITH;

IN THREE PARTS;

EMBRACING SOME OF THE SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES OR DOCTRINES
OF FAITH, THE POWER OR EFFECTS OF FAITH IN THE REGU-
LATION OF MAN'S INWARD NATURE, AND THE RELATION
OF FAITH TO THE DIVINE GUIDANCE.

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NEW YORK:
HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,
329 & 331 PEARL STREET,
FRANKLIN SQUARE.

1852.

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CHRISTIANITY harmonizes with itself, and involves in its progress the same great principles, which characterize its incipient state. The Christian, therefore, lives as he began to live. He began in faith. He lives, day by day, in the exercise of faith. And, by the grace of God, he is ultimately made victorious, and is brought into the possession of the divine image, through the same faith.

I have endeavored, in the following pages, to illustrate this great truth. The present Work, therefore, is, to some extent, kindred in its nature with the Interior Life. And it is proper to say here, that it has been found necessary, in order to its completeness, to transfer to it, in a few instances, the statements and principles, which are there given. I have particular reference in this remark to portions of the third and twelfth chapters in Part I, and of the ninth chapter in Pt. II. The leading object of both Works is the promotion of practical holiness: I have no doubt, that the object will meet with favor; but have less confidence, that the manner of executing it will be approved. But, however this may be, it is a satisfaction to know, that books, as well as other things, have their overruling Providence. And he, who writes, as well as he who acts in other ways, can exercise a cheerful confidence in leaving what he has done with God, who can distinguish between the result and the intention, and can make even the weak and imperfect things of his people to praise him.

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PART FIRST.

SOME OF THE

PHILOSOPHICAL AND SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES

AND DOCTRINES OF FAITH.

CHAPTER FIRST.

THE DOCTRINE OF NATURAL FAITH.

A distinction to be made between natural and religious faith. A full knowledge of religious faith implies some antecedent knowledge of natural faith. Natural faith or belief arises naturally and necessarily on its appropriate occasions. Is known chiefly by a reference to our own consciousness. Illustrations of its nature. Exists in different degrees. Does not concentrate attention upon itself. Its power.

ALL men have faith ; but it cannot be said with truth, that all men have *religious* faith. All men have faith in something ; but it is not true, that all men have faith in God. It is proper, therefore, to make a distinction, and to discriminate between religious faith and natural faith.

2.—In order, however, to understand religious faith, it is desirable, as it seems to me, to understand something of the nature or character of natural faith. Our attention, therefore, is properly directed, in the first place, to the inquiry, What is natural faith ? And in the prosecution of this inquiry, an obvious remark here is, that faith, or belief, which is only another name for the same thing, arises within us naturally and necessarily,

on its appropriate occasions. In other words, it does not depend for its origin on our volition; but it comes of itself. It does not depend, for instance, upon a man's volition or his mere arbitrary choice, whether he shall believe in his own existence or not; whether he shall believe in his personal identity or not; whether he shall believe in the existence of an outward material world or not. In these cases, and in others like them, it is conceded, that he cannot help believing. The state of mind, therefore, which we denominate faith or belief, using the terms in the natural and not in the religious sense, exists in us by our very nature. It is not only there; but by the very constitution of our nature, it must continue to remain there, while man is what he is.

3.—Belief not only exists in man, as an essential part of his nature; but we may add as a separate proposition, that man knows what it is. There is belief in man, and a knowledge of that belief. It is no more possible for man to be without the knowledge of belief, than it is to be without belief itself. If a man believes, for instance, in his own existence, if he exercises any degree of faith in the physical and mental power he possesses, if in the affairs of life he relies more or less on the statements and promises of his fellow-men, if he believes in the fact of the revolution of the heavenly bodies, in the vicissitudes of the seasons, or in many other things which might be mentioned as things likely to control his belief, it is obvious that he knows, and that he cannot help knowing what natural belief or faith

is, by his own inward experience. The knowledge of the thing, as well as the fact or existence of the thing, is involved necessarily in the constitution of the mind itself. And it is in that constitution, therefore, that we must seek for a knowledge of it. In other words, we obtain a knowledge of belief by a reference to our own inward consciousness; and we cannot obtain an adequate knowledge of it in any other way.

4.—It should be added, however, that, while, by turning the mind inward upon itself, we know what it is, we are, nevertheless, not able to define it. It is admitted, that it is not possible to give a definition of belief or faith, which, independently of inward experience, will render it easy to be understood. But this difficulty, whether it be regarded as greater or less, and which on a close examination will be found to be more formidable in appearance than in reality, is not limited to belief. All other states of mind, which are truly simple and undefinable, are better known by a reference to our own consciousness, than by any statements in words.

5.—Taking it for granted, in view of what has been said, that every person has exercised more or less of belief, and that consequently every person, as a matter of inward consciousness, knows something of its nature, we will proceed to give a few simple illustrations. The child, that sets out with his parents upon a long and untried journey, without a doubt that his parents will supply his wants and guide him in the right way and will bring him home again in safety, (if, indeed, he feels

that he can have a home but in the arms and presence of those parents,) knows what it is to believe. The young man, who for the first time enters upon business for himself, and in the prosecution of the plans and labors which now devolve upon him, finds it necessary to implicate himself with his fellow-men, and to enter into arrangements and contracts, which imply the discharge of duties and the fulfilment of promises on the part of others, knows what it is to believe. The man of more mature years, who is called by his countrymen to the high office of sustaining and administering the laws, but who is obviously unable to do it, without confidence in himself, without confidence in his subordinate agents and in the community at large, knows what it is to believe. So complicated are the relations of society, and so dependent is man on his fellow-man, that it is difficult to see, if man had not faith in others, how he could exist in the world for any length of time. But it seems to us unnecessary to dwell upon this point. It is sufficient to add here, that this state of mind, of which it is so difficult to give a definition, but which may be supposed to be so well known and understood in each one's consciousness, arises on a multitude of occasions; on the testimony of our senses in relation to the outward world; on the declarations of consciousness in relation to the facts and modifications of inward feeling; on the statements which are made by our fellow-men in the ordinary affairs of life; in view of that sort of circumstantial evidence, which is furnished by a continuous course of conduct in others; and in connec-

tion with the suggestions of the simplest forms of judgment and with the numerous and complicated deductions of reasoning.

6.—We proceed to say further, in explanation of this subject, that natural faith, which is always the same in its nature or essence, exists in different degrees. And this is so truly and distinctly the case, that we frequently employ different names as expressive of the different degrees of credence, which we yield. Differences in the degree of belief depend chiefly upon differences in the evidence, which is presented before the mind. And as the evidence in its different kinds is greater or less, we are in the habit of designating the resulting belief by names appropriate to its strength, such as presumption, slight or strong presumption, probability, low or high probability, and certainty. The same inward consciousness, which teaches us the nature of faith, indicates also the degree of it. And in accordance with this general view, which is scripturally as well as philosophically correct, we very frequently and very properly speak of a person's faith in reference to its degree ; describing one person as a man of strong faith and another as a man of weak or small faith, or by some other epithets intermediate in signification.

7.—Such is faith considered psychologically or mentally ; a principle, or rather a mental state, essential to the human mind ; naturally and necessarily arising on its appropriate occasions ; of which every one has the experience in the ordinary conditions and transactions of life, and of which consequently every one has a

knowledge in his own consciousness; a principle, not always the same in strength, but existing in a variety of degrees, proportioned to the evidence presented before it. And perhaps we may appropriately add in this connection, that there is no one of the natural principles of the human mind, which is more constantly operative and more important in its results, than natural faith is. I am aware, that this is not generally understood, and perhaps not generally admitted. And probably the reason of its not being so is, because faith is a principle which, in itself considered, attracts but little notice. We cannot doubt, nevertheless, that the statement is essentially true. We grant, that the state of mind, which we call belief or faith, is not, in general, so distinct in our consciousness, as some other states of mind. That is to say, it does not stand out quite so prominently, quite so distinctly, to inward observation. And we think we can see a reason for it. It is this. It seems to be the intention of nature, or rather of the wise and benevolent Author of nature, that we should *give less attention to the act of belief, than to the object believed in.* The fact, in the case under consideration, seems to be the same with what is known and acknowledged to exist in the case of those sensations, which connect us with the outward world. It is well known, in the case of these sensations, that the mind passes with rapidity from the inward state, which scarcely attracts any notice to itself, to the outward object, whatever it may be, which the inward sensation or state makes known to us. And in the same manner,

the state of mind, which we denominate belief, fulfils the purpose, for which it is given us, not by turning the mind's notice upon itself, but by passing on, if one may so express it, and by directing it towards the object believed in. With this remark in view, we repeat what has before been said, that there is no one of the natural principles of the human mind, which is more constantly operative, and more important in its results, than natural faith.

8.—It is this remarkable principle, exceedingly simple in its nature but almost infinite in its applications, which, not only connects the soul with its own acts, but with almost every thing around it ; with woods and waters and sun and moon and stars, which would be nothing to us, if they were not believed in ; with men, whose existence is made available and desirable to us only by belief in their existence and by confidence in their character ; with God himself, whom it is impossible to realize as God, except by means of faith. Annul this principle, so simple in its appearance and yet so wonderful in its results, and man becomes, by the law of his own nature, an isolated being ; he is like a person thrown into the midst of the ocean without even a plank to rest upon ; not only desolate and hopeless in himself ; but with nothing to console him in nature or help him in humanity, or be his support and his “ bread of life ” in the Infinite Mind.

CHAPTER SECOND.

ON NATURAL FAITH AS A SOURCE OR PRINCIPLE OF NATURAL ACTION.

Of natural strength in connection with natural faith. The connection of strength or decision of character with the will. The energy of the will's action depends in part upon faith. Evidences of the connection between strength of faith and energy and success in action. Evidence of this connection from inventions in the arts, from literature, and from great active enterprises. The existence and importance of this principle beginning to be recognized by philosophical writers.

It is a religious maxim, that a man is according to his faith. It is not less true, though perhaps in a diminished or mitigated sense, that it is also a philosophical or natural maxim. Certain it is, that faith, in the natural sense, is the foundation, to a considerable extent, of activity and energy in the natural man. In many things, though not invariably, the natural man will be found to be, in the result of what he proposes to undertake, very nearly or precisely what he *believes* himself to be. The measure of his strength will be found in the measure of his faith.

2.—It should be added, however, in order to a correct estimation of this matter, that strength or en-

ergy of character cannot be well explained without a reference to the will. And in accordance with this remark, the common idea of an energetic man is, that he is a person of a strong or energetic will. There are diversities in the constitution of the will, it is true; and as a result of this, there are diversities in personal energy; just as there are diversities in other elements and traits of character. Some men, in consequence of possessing original strength of will, are naturally more decided, more energetic than others. But other things being equal, in other words, on the supposition of there being no such constitutional differences between them as have been indicated, that person, as compared with others, will be the most energetic, who has the strongest faith. The believing man will be the strongest man.

3.—And it may be added here, that there is a natural or permanent law at the foundation of this statement. It is this. To will to do a thing implies and requires, as an antecedent condition of its own existence, a belief in the possibility of doing it. In other words, we are so constituted, as is well understood I suppose, that it is not possible for us to put forth a volition, a determination, to do a thing, which at the same time we believe it impossible to do. And as a principle flowing out of this law, and making a part of it, we may add further, that, where our belief in the practicability of a thing is weak, our strength of purpose, our volition, will be proportionably weak. Such, at least, is the natural tendency; although it is possible

for it to be counteracted by other mental efforts made with a view to counteract it. This, then, is the law of our mental constitution in relation to natural faith. A strong faith, other things being equal, makes a strong will. A weak faith, on the other hand, other things being equal, makes a weak will. And accordingly even among men, who have not experienced the grace and power of religion, the strong man, as compared with other men, who possess naturally the same traits of mind, is the man of strong faith.

But this is not all. Faith pours vigor into the affections, as well as into the will. It gives energy to the action of the heart. It is an enemy of debility; it makes those, who possess it, mighty in the power of love.

4.—We continually see the evidence of the truth of this general position, in the efforts of men, in various situations in life. We can hardly turn to any art or calling, to any scientific, moral, or political movement, without seeing it. Every where we find it to be true, that faith gives power. The history, for instance, of mechanical inventions, and of scientific improvements generally, furnishes an illustration of the subject. The labors of many persons, labors to which we are indebted for many of the most astonishing results in the mechanic arts and in the sciences, have been perseveringly and successfully prosecuted under circumstances of want, of opposition, and of ridicule. Nothing seemed sufficient to stop their efforts. And the inquiry naturally arises here, what was the secret of this remarkable perseverance, of this great energy,

under circumstances exceedingly trying? Whatever incidental influences may have existed, one thing is certain, that one great element of their energy and perseverance was FAITH. They had faith in the value of the object; they had faith in the possibility of its being ascertained and realized; they had faith also in their ability to accomplish what they had undertaken to do. This was the secret, (we do not say exclusively, but certainly in a very great degree,) of their indomitable strength. When, therefore, at distant periods, we find individuals, arising perhaps from the humblest walks of life, and accomplishing by their almost unaided efforts great results in science and the arts, the Franklins and Fultons of their generation, we may be assured, that the element of natural faith, if not of any other and higher kind of faith, has sustained and invigorated the conceptions and efforts of natural genius.

5.—I think we hazard nothing in saying further, that faith is the basis, or rather is the source, the well-spring of whatever is most valuable in literature. Where there is no faith, it results unavoidably, that there is no true feeling, no genuine "emotionality," no deep and abiding sympathy with whatever is true in morals, or beautiful in nature. In other words, a man without faith is a man, to a considerable degree at least, without true affection; one who looks upon nature and upon his fellow-men to trifle with them, and to sneer at them, and not to trust and to love them. Having no sympathy for others, he can command no sympathy for himself. The man without faith, therefore, in lit-

erature as well as in other things, is a man without abiding power ; and we could almost say, that he is a man without any real power whatever, except, as in the case of Voltaire and others of his class, the power, which involves of course the faculty of a sharp external observation, of the mere artist, and the power of ridicule ; neither of which either constitutes or implies the existence of those elements, which can command, for any length of time, the love and the homage of mankind. Such a man is no Homer, no Shakspeare, no Cervantes. He cannot with any justice be regarded as the possessor of that creative faculty, a faculty having its very life in belief, which can give birth to imaginary creations of men and nature, of thought and action ; creations, which, in being true to life around and life within, are not the less real for being imaginary. He may understand perspective ; he may be a connoisseur ; he may be unexceptionable and complete in whatever is addressed to the outward eye, in whatever is comprehended under the term artistic ; but his work, after all, will stand forth in the eyes of men just what it really is, a marble statue, well sculptured, well proportioned, and well in every other respect, except that the principle of life, the immortal spirit, is not there.

6.—Faith is the basis of all great, active enterprises. If a man cannot think well, nor write well, without faith ; so in all difficult enterprises, which imply physical as well as mental effort, he cannot act well. Without faith there would have been no Parthenon, and no Pyramids of Egypt. Without faith there would have been no

Thermopylæ, and no memorable Marathon. Hannibal could not have passed the Alps without faith. Cincinnatus could neither have ploughed nor have left the plough ; could neither have sowed for the harvest, nor trained soldiers for victory, without faith. Columbus could not have crossed the ocean without faith. And we speak here, not of religious, but of natural faith. Cortes could not have conquered Mexico without faith. Park, and Ledyard, and Cooke, and Bruce could not have explored unknown countries without faith. The English Revolution, the French Revolution, the American Revolution, whatever faults or crimes may have accompanied any or all of them, could not have been accomplished without faith. The same may be said of all great civil and political movements. A mere sneerer, the man who sits in his easy chair, believing in nothing and laughing at every thing, could have done nothing of these things. No oceans are crossed by him ; no nations are conquered ; no boundless forests are subdued ; no rude barbarism is tamed ; no new civilization is planted and reared up, at the expense of toil and blood, in mighty triumph.

7.—It is one of the favorable signs of the times, that the existence of this important element of our nature begins to be generally recognized. Philosophy, though lingering long, has at last come to the aid of religion. She endeavored to solve the problems of human nature, without admitting this principle ; but found herself unable to do it. Men of literature, men of philosophic inquiry, unite in acknowledging, not

merely the existence of faith, but its mighty influence, even when considered out of its religious relations. As men of observation and thought, they see clearly, that there are a multitude of facts in human history, both individual and national, which preclude altogether any satisfactory explanation, except on the ground of its existence and its great power. And these men, men whose testimony is weighty, and whose concurrence every good man would desire, begin to look, in consequence of the advance of their philosophy, with a more favorable eye on religion. They found the Bible filled with declarations in relation to faith, which they did not understand; declarations which they found no where else, and which they hesitated to receive. But it is now no longer a matter of surprise, that a principle should effect so much in religion, which is seen and acknowledged to be so powerful in nature.



CHAPTER THIRD.

ON RELIGIOUS FAITH AS COMPARED WITH NATURAL FAITH.

These two states of mind greatly different from each other. Related to each other, nevertheless, by certain resemblances or analogies. Analogous in having respectively their appropriate objects. Extract from Cecil. Analogous in multiplying themselves on their appropriate occasions. Analogous in the relations they sustain to present knowledge. Illustration of this view. Analogous in the fact that they exist in different degrees. Analogous in the fact, that both are influenced by the law of Habit. Analogous in their influence in communicating energy of action. Of the respective sources of their power.

WE proceed now to the subject of religious faith. Natural faith, as we have already had occasion to see, is faith arising naturally on its appropriate natural occasions, directed to its appropriate natural objects, and sustained by the operation of natural causes. Religious faith, if we have a right understanding of it, may be regarded as in some respects a state of mind the same with that of natural faith ; that is to say, it may be regarded as the same state, psychologically or mentally considered ; but it differs from natural faith in the particulars, that it is directed to religious objects, or those objects to which religious feelings are appropriate ;

that it is called into exercise on its appropriate religious occasions ; and is sustained by religious influences. It is obvious, therefore, that the difference between natural faith and religious faith is a marked and a great one ; and that it would tend to great perplexity and error, if they should be confounded together. At the same time it is evident, I think, that in a number of particulars there is a resemblance or analogy existing between them, which it is not only interesting to contemplate, but which may aid in the better understanding of religious faith. A few concise statements will assist in illustrating this analogy.

2.—Accordingly we remark, in the first place, that religious faith, like natural faith, has its appropriate objects ; objects, which are in some way connected with religious experience. As natural faith is known in part, by attaching itself to natural objects ; so one of the marks or characteristics of religious faith is, that it attaches itself to religious objects. The facts, which we notice in children, furnish an illustration of what has now been said. The life of children, I suppose, may in general be regarded as a life of faith. Not of religious faith, it is true ; but still of faith, of *natural* faith. It is interesting to see, though they know that they are entirely dependent for food, raiment, and a home, what entire confidence they repose in their parents ; a confidence, which, in excluding doubt, banishes anxiety. Hence it is that they live in such simplicity and quietness of spirit ; and in the language of Scripture, are “ careful for nothing.” When the object of this state

of mind is changed, and it is transferred from the earthly parent to God, it becomes religious faith. The existence of such faith not only constitutes God our Father ; but those who exercise it, become, in the language of the Savior, " like little children." They have the same simple-hearted confidence. Freed from the anxieties of unbelief, they leave their life and their health, their food and their raiment, their joy and their sorrow, in the divine keeping. The resemblance or analogy between the two states of mind, as represented in these two cases, is essentially complete. And yet one of them is to be regarded and spoken of as an instance of natural faith merely. The other is a religious faith.

3.—I find, in the writings of Richard Cecil, an illustration of the view of the subject just given, which seems to me to be suitable to be introduced here.—" I imprinted on my daughter," this devout writer remarks, " the idea of Faith, at a very early age. She was playing one day with a few beads, which seemed to delight her wonderfully. Her whole soul was absorbed in her beads. I said—' My dear, you have some pretty beads there.' ' Yes, Papa ! ' ' And you seem to be vastly pleased with them.' ' Yes, Papa ! ' ' Well now, throw them behind the fire.' The tears started into her eyes. She looked earnestly at me, as though she ought to have a reason for such a cruel sacrifice. ' Well, my dear, do as you please ; but you know I never told you to do any thing, which I did not think would be good for you.' She looked at me a few moments longer,

and then summoning up all her fortitude—her breast heaving with the effort—she dashed them into the fire. ‘Well,’ said I: ‘there let them lie: you shall hear more about them another time; but say no more about them now.’ Some days after, I bought her a box full of larger beads, and toys of the same kind. When I returned home, I opened the treasure and set it before her: she burst into tears with ecstasy. ‘Those, my child,’ said I, ‘are yours, because you believed me, when I told you it would be better for you to throw those two or three paltry beads behind the fire. Now that has brought you this treasure. But now, my dear, remember, as long as you live, what FAITH is. I did all this to teach you the meaning of Faith. You threw your beads away when I bade you, because you had faith in me that I never advised you but for your good. Put the same confidence in God. Believe every thing that he says in his word. Whether you understand it or not, have faith in him that he means your good.’

4.—We remark again, that religious faith, like natural faith, while it attaches itself to a particular object, may at the same time multiply itself in connection with many occasions, and situations, which have a relation to the object. Natural faith, for instance, attaches itself to man as one of its objects; but it is not man on one occasion merely or in one situation merely, but on many occasions and in many situations. We exercise trust or belief in man as the head of the family, as a neighbor and friend, as a citizen, as a man of skill in his art or calling, as one able and willing to fulfil his personal

contracts, as a magistrate ; and on other occasions and in other situations, which it is unnecessary to specify. Our faith in God, in like manner will multiply itself on its appropriate occasions. We exercise belief or faith in God, as the sustainer of the laws of nature, as a God both of rectitude and of goodness in the fulfilment of those laws, as the author of Revelation, as the fulfiller of the covenants made from time to time with his people, as present in all his providences, however dark they may appear to human sight, as unalterably true to the declarations he has made and the promises he has given.

5.—We remark, in the third place, that religious faith, like natural faith, exists, not perhaps in opposition to, but in distinction from present knowledge. That is to say, in the exercise of faith, we do many things both in nature and religion, of the results of which we do not possess, at the present time, any certain foresight. If faith did not carry us beyond the reach of our own understanding, beyond the line of human reason, beyond what we can now perceive, it would not be faith ; and those, who might walk within the circle described by that measurement, could not be said to walk by faith, but by sight.

6.—The daughter of a celebrated physician was once attacked by a violent and dangerous fever ; but she exhibited great resignation and tranquillity. She said, she was ignorant of what might effect her cure ; and if it were left to herself to prescribe, she might desire remedies which would be prejudicial. Shall I not gain

every thing, she added, by abandoning myself entirely to my father? He desires my recovery; he knows, much better than I do, what is adapted to the restoration of my health; and having confidence, therefore, that every thing will be done for me which can be done, I remain without solicitude either in reference to the means or the result.—This was an instance of natural faith; believing without knowing; and entirely peaceable and tranquil, while trusting itself in the hands of another. Religious faith, in like manner, trusts itself in the hands of God; knowing nothing and enduring all things, in the full confidence that it will be well in the end.

7.—Another remark, which we have to make on the subject, is this. Natural faith and religious faith are analogous to each other, in the circumstance that they both exist in different degrees. There are natural men, as we have already had occasion to intimate, who are weak in natural faith; men irresolute in purpose and action; men, who do nothing comparatively, because they do not believe, that they are able to do any thing. It is just so in religion. There are men weak in religious faith, just as there are men weak in natural faith; and who in religious things exhibit the weakness which characterizes the others in natural things. And on the other hand, as there are men strong in natural faith, and strong in natural action; so in religion there are men, in whom faith is not merely a guiding light, but a principle of movement. It is so strong in them, that it constitutes a life; and they may be said to *live* by faith.

8.—We proceed to remark again, that the analogy or resemblance between natural faith and religious faith may be observed in another important particular. It is an important law of natural faith, that it acquires strength by repetition or habit. Of the existence of the law of habit, and of its extensive applications, probably no persons, who are acquainted with the operations of the human mind, will have any doubt: and in accordance with this law, every new exercise of confidence or faith in any one of our fellow men, tends to increase the confidence or faith already existing. Religious as well as natural faith may be increased by the same law and in the same manner. In other words, every new exercise of faith in God and in his great precepts and promises, which is the true idea of religious faith, increases the strength of the principle of faith. This is, practically, a very important view; and especially to those who are desirous of living a truly holy life. I am aware that the increase of religious faith, as well as its origin in the first instance, is the gift of God. But God very properly requires us to observe the laws of our mental nature, and to do what it is our privilege to do. Accordingly the blessing of God, manifested in the increase of religious faith, seems to me, as a general thing, to conform to this view; and that those and those only who, in observance of the natural law, *diligently exercise the faith they already have*, can reasonably expect to have more, either by natural increase or by special grace. And, indeed, the doctrine which has now been advanced will apply to all

the Christian graces, since God no where gives encouragement, so far as we can perceive, that he will add to the possessions of him who misimproves even his one talent. "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance ; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." Matt. xiii. 12.

9.—We remark further, that religious faith, in perfect analogy to that which is natural, brings personal and mighty energy to its possessor ; and places in his hand, in the sharp contest with sin and Satan, the shield of victory. It does this, among other things, and on the same principle that natural faith does, by giving exceeding power to his religious volitions or determinations. The man, who has no faith, is necessarily powerless. He is smitten by the irreversible law of nature, as well as by the present and special frown of God. He lies prostrate upon the ground, a mere imbecile, useless and impracticable alike to good and evil ; but he, who has faith, acts, and acts vigorously. Faith diffuses a calm but effective energy through the whole man : especially is this true of religious faith. Natural faith gives power in the subjection of natural enemies ; religious faith gives power and victory over enemies that are spiritual. Natural faith is patient, persevering, and successful in ascertaining natural truths, and in extending the boundaries of natural knowledge. Religious faith sits patiently at the fountains of religious instruction ; and holding inward intercourse, and being powerful with God, it obtains

knowledge of those higher things of a moral and religious nature, which even the angels desire to look into. Natural faith passes over natural barriers, over barren wastes and tangled forests, over valleys and mountains, over rivers and oceans ; but religious faith, coming in conflict with religious or spiritual obstacles, resists and conquers all hindrances, whatever they be, which stand between the soul and the possession of the true spiritual kingdom ; contending against sin original and sin practical, against temptations from within and temptations from without, against Satan invisible and Satan embodied in human agency, and crying with the victorious voice of the one in the wilderness, "make straight the way of the Lord." Natural faith unites together families, stretches abroad the connecting links of neighborhoods, constitutes corporations, and in the greatest extent of its power lays the foundation of states and nations. Religious faith, distrustful of its own power of vision, looks at things with God's eye ; and viewing them in the higher and divine light, expands the limits of social connection and identifies them with the limits of the universe. It places God at the head. It unites in the sweep of its broad view not only individuals and families, not only neighborhoods and nations, but the inhabitants of distant worlds, and all higher orders and classes of beings into one, binding all to the great centre, and constituting universal harmony.

10.—If natural faith is powerful, as we have seen that it is, religious faith is much more so ; aiming at

higher objects, and producing greater results. And this is what we should naturally expect from the supports, on which they respectively rest. Natural faith rests upon natural things: that is to say, it is faith in man; in man's wisdom and man's capability. Religious faith rests upon religious things; that is to say, it is faith in God's wisdom and God's mighty resources. The man who possesses religious faith, may be said to have the power, of adding the infinite to the finite. He relies on the divine promises, in the occasions on which they properly apply, as things in a PRESENT fulfilment; and thus incorporates with his own comparative and acknowledged weakness, the mighty energy of a present God. And besides all this, God bestows especial honor upon those, who possess religious faith. They and they only can properly be regarded as his own, his chosen and adopted children. Their names are written upon his heart of infinite love. Every element of his nature is pledged in their behalf. And hence we should not be surprised, when we consider what power faith has in itself by its natural law, and also that it takes hold of the infinite God, and enlists in our behalf his mighty heart of love, that the Holy Scriptures are sprinkled over, as it were, with illustrations and declarations of the immense efficacy and of the wonderful triumphs of this divine principle:

“Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,

“And looks to that alone;

“Laughs at impossibilities,

“And cries, IT SHALL BE DONE.”

CHAPTER FOURTH.

OF THE FOUNDATIONS OR SOURCES OF FAITH.

Belief requires evidence. Of an objection which is made in connection with this view. God has not left himself without witness. Evidence from the structure of the human mind. Evidence from the works of nature. Evidence from the Bible. Unbelievers without excuse.

It is hardly necessary to say, that the state of mind, which we variously denominate faith or belief, does not depend for its origin, upon a mere act or volition; but upon the appropriate sources or grounds of belief. The structure of the mind is such, that it does not allow a person to believe merely as he chooses or wills to believe; but, on the contrary, requires the belief to be conformed to the evidence appropriate to it.

2.—We are aware, that this view of the subject, which seems to us too obvious to admit of controversy, opens the way, nevertheless, to an objection on the part of some persons, who will be disposed to excuse themselves in unbelief, on the ground that an opposite state is an *involuntary* one. Their language is, that they would like to believe; but that they are unable to do it

without adequate evidence ; intimating in the plea or excuse, which they offer, that the requisite evidence is not presented before them.

3.—The answer to all pleas and excuses of this kind is the declaration, which our Heavenly Father himself has authorized, that God “*has not left himself without witness.*” Acts xiv. : 15–17. “We preach unto you,” says the Apostle Paul, “that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein ; who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless, *he left not himself without witness*, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”

4.—The difficulty is not in involuntary belief, but in voluntary unbelief ; in voluntarily, willfully, perseveringly shutting our eyes to those evidences of God’s existence, and of a supreme moral government, to which every object and every event bears testimony. God has not left himself without a witness in the structure of the human mind ; he has not left himself without a witness in the beautiful array of nature’s works ; he has not left himself without a witness in the wonderful succession of individual and national providences, which speak, trumpet-tongued, of eternal truth and eternal justice ; he has not left himself without a witness in the long succession of consecrated and believing men, who, having the image of God, the divinity within them, were rightly commissioned to testify of him, whose

image they bore. "The glorious company of the Apostles," "the goodly fellowship of the Prophets," "the noble army of the Martyrs," "the holy Church throughout the world," all persons in all ages of the world, of whatever country and of whatever name, who have borne the divine image, have been witnesses, eloquent witnesses for God.

5.—The evidence, which God furnishes, would compel belief, were it not for voluntary opposition. We *choose* to think of ourselves and of our own interests, to the neglect of all adequate thought of God, and of our religious interests. On this subject, I doubt not, that the feelings of thoughtful and serious men are strong and unalterable. To the suggestion, that God has left himself without witness, or that he has not furnished adequate witness, they can yield no assent.—Referring again to the sources of this witness, to which we have just now briefly alluded, we remark more particularly, that the nature of the human mind is such, that it bears, as it were, the idea of a Supreme Being, and other truths, closely connected with the idea of a Supreme Being, written on its very structure. It is a psychological fact, which a careful observation of the progress of human culture has fully demonstrated, that the human mind, when brought into full and unperverted action, always develops the idea of a God. It is an idea written there in letters uneffaceable; and, though sometimes obscured and deeply hidden, it will always come out and make itself evident, when it is brought to the light. And there too, essential in the

structure of the same mind, are the conceptions of truth and justice, of sympathy and benevolence as due from man to his fellow-man, of immutable wrong and immutable right. There is no barbarism so low, so linked to the extreme of moral degradation, where these bright conceptions, in connection with their related emotions, do not exist in greater or less distinctness. The mind, therefore, by its very nature, by a voice which cries out unceasingly from its depths, bears witness for God. Were it not so, heathenism, still more degraded and destitute than it is at present, would have heard no announcement from its moral teachers; would have had no Socrates, no Plato.

6.—The world, of which we are a part, and the systems of worlds with which we are connected, bear witness for God. There is not a tree nor a flower, no river, nor lake, nor cataract, no hill, nor valley, nor mountain-top, nothing on the earth nor under the earth, neither the fruits it bears on its surface nor the minerals it cherishes in its bosom, no insect, nor bird, nor quadruped, nor any other thing of the infinite varieties presented to our notice, which, on a careful examination in itself and its relations, does not bear its testimony.

7.—More than a hundred years ago, Mr. Addison, speaking of the evidences of design in the works of creation, made a remark to this effect, that, if our inquiries should be adequately extended, it would be found, that the earth in its interior structure is as curious and well-contrived a frame, as that of a human

body. "We should see," he says, "the same concatenation and subserviency, the same necessity and usefulness, the same beauty and harmony in all and every of its parts, as what we discover in the body of every single animal." The mineralogy and geology of modern times have already done enough to verify this suggestion. But if the presence of God, if his wonderful wisdom and power, are seen in layers of earth, in successive strata of rocks, and in the deposition of fossil remains, how much more may they reasonably be expected to be seen in the organized and living bodies that cover the earth's surface, in animals, and especially in man. And then the heavens above us, the sun, moon, and stars, all give their testimony. So that we may well say, if we had only the book of outward nature to look in, it would be hard to be an unbeliever; and could almost add, in the slightly altered language of a popular poet,

"How canst thou disbelieve, and hope to be forgiven!"

8.—But God has a testimony also or witness for himself in his providences; in other words, in all events which take place, especially when considered in their moral aspects and relations. The history of nations and individuals furnishes a series of facts, from which, if we could get it from no other source, may be deduced the general proposition, that all actions, which are not merely instinctive, have a moral character; and are attended with a moral retribution. We do not say, that the adjustment of reward and punishment to the

moral merit and demerit of actions is entirely perfect in the present life ; but it is so much so, as to leave no doubt of a moral government and a moral governor. It is true, that the vicious sometimes succeed in life, becoming rich and honored, while the virtuous suffer in poverty and contempt ; but it does not follow from this, that the vicious are happy, or that the virtuous are miserable. The virtuous have an inward consolation, which more than compensates for outward adversities ; and the vicious, with scarcely an exception, have inward sorrows, which are none the less deep and real for being concealed under the garb of outward prosperity. The history of man, therefore, including the history of nations as well as of individuals, utters its declarations loudly and impressively, in favor of God and of his government.

9.—But God's great testimony for himself is his Bible. It is said of the believer, that "he hath the witness in himself." And so of the Word of God. Considering the early periods of the world, in which it was composed, the nature of the remarkable events which are recorded in it, the imposing character of the moral and religious doctrines which are proclaimed, the illustration of these doctrines in the lives and actions of a series of men such as the world never saw before, and of which the world was not worthy, looking at the subject in this point of view, the candid mind cannot fail to see and to acknowledge, that it is a Book, of which God himself, in some important sense, must have been the author. It seems to us, independently of the

external evidence of miracles, that neither the Book, nor the things contained in the Book, could have come into existence without God. It is here, that God proclaims himself, in language both written and acted, in the language of the precept given and the language of the precept lived, which cannot fail to be understood. And hence it is, that Lord Bacon has remarked with so much truth and beauty : "Thy creatures have been my books, but thy scriptures much more. I have sought thee in fields and gardens ; but have found thee in thy temples."

10.—The Bible may be regarded as a sort of proclamation on the part of God, to those who have revolted from him and have gone off in the ways of sin, that He is still the God, and will continue to be the God of those, who will return and acknowledge him to be such. If man is only willing to be saved by the surrender of himself into God's hands, to be his always and his alone, to be out of his own keeping and subject to the divine keeping, God is willing and desirous to save him. All we have to do is to give ourselves to God ; and he will give himself to us in return, in all which is necessary for us. And accordingly it is worthy of notice, that we have in this Book abundant promises, that those, who will sincerely seek to obtain knowledge, shall have assistance. God says in various forms of expression, try to know, and I will help you to know ; seek me and ye shall be found of me.

11.—We cannot admit, therefore, any pleas or excuses of the unbeliever, on the ground of a defect of

evidence. We do not believe, that he can deliberately offer such excuses, without compelling his own inward nature to cry out against him. His declaration of unbelief is neither more nor less, than a declaration, that he is too indolent to open his eyes, that he may read what is written not only in God's Word, but stands out legibly inscribed upon the hands and feet and face of universal nature. Such excuses, which even heathenism rejects, will not stand the final test. Those, who make them, will be found wanting.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

FAITH THE FOUNDATION OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE.

Of the relations of priority and influence existing in religious principles. Faith the leading principle or the foundation of the religious life. Faith in God the foundation of knowledge, as well as of religion. Incident in the Life of Mr. Berridge. Reference to the Concordance. Further proofs of the general doctrine, that faith is the foundation of religion.

It would be a natural view of the subject, independently of any thing said in the Scriptures, that some principles of the religious life have greater influence, and are more fundamental in their character, than others. Such a view would be natural, because we find this relation of comparative priority and influence existing in all other cases. In the external world, for instance, in the forms and operations of outward things, the great principles, which originate and sustain the life of nature, have their relations of time, place, and influence. In the economy of the human mind also, it is easy to see, that its principles exist and operate in gradations of subordination and ascendancy; and that those, which are subsequent in origin and inferior in

position, will depend for their action upon those, which are first in time, or first in efficacy.

2.—It is thus in religion. It will be found to be true, as we have already alleged, that some principles of the religious life have greater influence, and are more fundamental in their character than others. And of this important class of religious principles, it is equally true, that some one will be found to take the precedence, in place and in influence, of all the rest ; not only belonging to what may be denominated the first series or class ; but, as compared with all the others, being the first in it. And this principle is Faith. It is faith, which stands foremost in place, and foremost in influence ; a principle upon which all other principles rest, as upon their true, natural, and strong foundation.

3.—It is a singular fact, and one which has not been often noticed, that faith in God is not only the foundation of all religion, but is also the foundation of all knowledge. If we do not believe in the credibility of those powers, which God has given us, and consequently if we do not believe in the goodness and truth of God as the author of those powers, we cannot believe in any thing. All knowledge, on this supposition, necessarily fails, because it is destitute of an adequate basis. But while we assert, that there can be no well established knowledge without faith in God, we can assert with still greater confidence, that there can be no religion without it. Religion, without faith in God as its basis, is an impossibility. At the same time in taking the position, that Faith is, and must be the foundation of religion,

we ask as religious men, no more for religion, than philosophers ask, and are obliged to ask, for philosophy.

4.—In reading the life of Mr. John Berridge, a worthy minister of the English Episcopal Church, who had long preached the doctrine of works as the great source of hope and safety, I noticed, that his biographer, in connection with the fact of his having made some anxious inquiries and having experienced certain peculiar exercises of mind, remarks, that he “saw the rock, upon which he had been splitting for nearly thirty years.” And the writer adds, “immediately he began to think on the words *faith* and *believe*; and looking into his Concordance, he found them inserted in many successive columns. This surprised him to a great degree; and he instantly formed the resolution to preach Jesus Christ, and salvation by *faith*.”*

5.—We introduce this short extract, chiefly on account of its reference to the Concordance. If any person will take the trouble to look into the Concordance, and carefully notice the terms FAITH and BELIEVE, and others related to them either by meaning or etymology, he will see at once the large space, which they occupy. And by referring to the passages, as they stand in the Bible, he cannot fail to be deeply struck with the important position, which Faith holds in scriptural history and in theology. He will find, that faith is not only the beginning of the religious life, but is its great support from beginning to end; that by

* See the Christian World Unmasked by the Rev. John Berridge, with the Life of the author prefixed, Boston Ed.

faith we are justified from the sins of the past ; and that faith is equally necessary to keep us from sin in time to come. Looking at the subject, therefore, in the light of the Scriptures, we feel abundantly justified in what has been said, viz. : that faith is the great foundation of the religious life.

6.—But this is not all. If we will take the trouble carefully to analyze our religious feelings, and to trace them in their origin and their relations, we shall find this important truth, sustained by additional evidence from that source. If, for instance, we should undertake to enter into an examination of the nature and operations of the principle of LOVE, we could not fail to see, that it requires the antecedent existence of faith in the beloved object as the basis and the condition of its own existence. In other words, there cannot be love without faith going before. Take almost any other Christian grace, such as the spirit of submission, of gratitude, or of prayer, and it will be found that they sustain intimate relations with other states of the mind, particularly with faith ; and that in reality they cannot possibly exist without faith. When they are closely examined, all the Christian graces, however divergent and remote they may now appear, will be found to converge to one centre, and to rest upon one foundation. A remark, which furnishes a reason for the remarkable and important saying of the Scriptures, that “ without faith it is impossible to please God.”

7.—We may add further, that what has been said is confirmed by individual experience ; particularly the

experience of eminent Christians. There may have been *remarkable* experiences without much faith; experiences characterized by visions and by strong emotions, and which have been the subjects of much attention and conversation; but there has not been, and there cannot be, a sound and thorough scriptural experience, one which will truly renovate the soul and will carry a person victoriously through the trials and labors of life, without strong faith as its basis. So that it can be truly said of all those eminent men in different countries and different ages of the world, who have done most and suffered most for the cause of true religion, like the worthies mentioned in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, that they lived and died in faith. They had other eminent Christian graces, it is true, but it was strong faith, which gave a character to their lives and actions.

8.—Those, who are familiar with the life of Rev. Richard Baxter, a man not more eminent for personal piety than for abundant religious labors, will recollect, that he was sometimes tempted in a remarkable manner by doubts in relation to the Bible and some of the leading truths contained in it. These trials naturally led him to reflect upon the nature of faith and its relation to other Christian graces. In connection with a temptation to unbelief, such as has been referred to, he remarks as follows: “From this assault, I was forced to take notice, that our belief of the truth of the Word of God and of the life to come *is the spring of all grace*; and with which it rises or falls, flourishes or

decays, is actuated or stands still ; and that there is more of this secret *unbelief* at the bottom, than most of us are aware of ; and that our love of the world, our boldness in sin, our neglect of duty, are caused hence. I easily observed in myself, that, if at any time, Satan, more than at other times, weakened my belief of Scripture and of the life to come, my zeal in every religious duty abated with it, and I grew more indifferent in religion than before." "But when," he adds, "FAITH REVIVED, then none of the parts or concerns of religion seemed small ; and then man seemed nothing, and the world a shadow, and God was all."

9.—We close these remarks with referring to a few familiar passages. "Behold, his soul, which is lifted up, is not upright in him ; *but the just shall live by his faith.* Habakkuk, 2 : 3.—"And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus saith unto them, *Believe ye, that I am able to do this ?* They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, *according to your faith be it unto you ;*" Mat. 9 : 28, 29.—It is said of Barnabas, that "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and *of faith ;* Acts 11 : 24.—"Therefore, being justified by *faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ; by whom also we have access by *faith* into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God ;" Rom. 5 : 1, 2.—"Therefore we are always confident, knowing, that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord ; for we walk by *faith*, and not by sight ;" 2d Cor. 5 : 6, 7.—"The

life, which I now live in the flesh, I live by the *faith* of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me ;” Galat. 2 : 20.—“ But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, is evident ; for the just shall live by *faith*.” Galat. 3 : 11.—“ For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world ; and this is the victory, that overcometh the world, even our *faith* ; 1st John 5 : 4.—The Apostle, speaking of the ancient saints, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Sarah, says, that “ *these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off ; and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth ;*” Heb. 11. 13.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

ON THE CONNECTION OF FAITH WITH FEELING.

Faith the foundation of feeling. Illustrated in the case of natural faith, which is the foundation of natural feeling. Religious faith followed by religious feeling. Faith and feeling correspond to each other in degree. Explanation of the faith of the heart. Those, who have Christ's faith, will have Christ's heart. And this by a necessary law of our nature.

FAITH is the source, the parent of all true feeling. And in saying this, we ought to add, that we use the term feeling in a general sense; meaning by it not merely the emotions, to which it is sometimes limited, but those other modifications of our sensibilities, which we include under the denomination of the desires and affections.

2.—And it is proper to say here, that faith is the source, the parent of all true feeling and affection in the natural sense, as well as in the religious sense. Certain it is, that this statement admits of an easy and a satisfactory illustration in the case of the affection of love. It requires no proof to sustain the assertion, that natural love is based upon natural faith. If we

have entire confidence in another, if we believe him to be amiable and pure in feeling, and upright in principle, it is the natural result of such confidence, that we shall love him. And on the other hand, it will be very difficult, and I think we may say, it will be found naturally impossible for a person to love another, (except, perhaps, with that lower form of love, which is synonymous with pity or sympathy,) in whom he has no faith. And the same confidence, the same faith, which inspires the affection of love in the first instance, gives it permanency in time to come. The one perpetuates itself in company with the other. Suggestions may arise, and temptations may assail us, but love will live, if confidence does not perish. But how soon does our love to a person, to whom we were once devotedly attached, cease, when our faith in him ceases! No sooner is the confidence, which we reposed in his amiability, in his truth and honor, and other estimable qualities, taken away; in other words, no sooner is our *faith* in the existence of these traits taken away, than the love, which rested upon it, falls at once to the ground.

3.—The law of the religious affections is the same. They always imply the antecedent existence of faith. Religious faith, sustained by the Holy Spirit, but operating in a manner entirely analogous to the operations of natural faith, is undoubtedly the true basis of religious love. Without the key of faith the foundation of divine love, which refreshes and gives beauty to the whole soul, would never be opened within us. It would

be impossible ; because it would obviously be a result, not only without reason, but against reason. It is because we believe or have faith in God as just, benevolent and holy, as possessed of every possible perfection calculated to attract and secure our love, that we love him.

4.—And there is another great truth or law, closely related to that which has just been stated. Love not only requires faith as its basis, but it is equally obvious and equally certain, that our love will rise and fall, just in proportion to our faith. If, for instance, our hearts are full of love to God at the present moment, and we should the next moment cease to believe in him as a God of truth, goodness, and justice, our love would necessarily terminate at once. Or if our faith should not cease entirely, but should merely become perplexed and weakened for some reasons, our love would become perplexed and weakened just in the same degree. Such is the great law of our intellectual and moral being ; and such is the doctrine of the Scriptures.

5.—These principles help us to understand what is meant *by the faith of the heart* ; a form of expression which we frequently hear. Properly speaking, or perhaps we should say, speaking psychologically or mentally, faith seems to be an attribute of the intellect, rather than of the heart ; an act or state of the understanding rather than of the sensibilities. And yet it must be admitted, that, in the order of mental sequence, it is a state of mind, which, in consequence of being subsequent to perceptions, lays nearer the heart, is in much closer proximity with it, than some other intel-

lectual states or acts. But this is not the only or the most important particular to be considered here. The important fact, and the only one which can give a satisfactory explanation of what is denominated the faith of the heart, is the law of mental relation and action just now stated, viz.: that religious affection is consequent on religious faith, and that they correspond to each other in degree. A faith of the heart, then, is a faith, which affects the heart. A faith of the heart is a faith, which works by love. "In Jesus Christ," says the Apostle, "neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision, but *faith which worketh by love.*" Gal. 5 : 6.

6.—I suppose, that there may be, and that there probably is a sort of faith, either so general and unspecific in its nature, or so weak in its degree, that it does not produce love. A man, for instance, may believe in Jesus Christ as a mere man, as an inhabitant of Judea in the time of Pontius Pilate, and as a very remarkable and good man. But this belief, which does not seem to differ from that which we have in Confucius and Socrates, never is, and never can be the source of such feelings, as those which naturally follow our belief in Christ as one sent from God, as the beloved son of the Father, as an authorized teacher, and as an atoning sacrifice. And then, again, our faith, even if it be right in other respects, may be so weak, so vacillating, so closely allied to actual scepticism, as to fail of being followed by that love, which purifies the heart; the only love which can be acceptable to God. The

faith of the heart, therefore, is that faith, which makes a new heart; in other words, which inspires new affections; such affections, as are conformable to God's law and will.

7.—And faith has power to do this. Faith can make a new heart; and nothing but faith can do it. In saying this, it will be naturally understood, that we speak of the mind and of mental sequence; in other words, of that which takes place in the mind and in the mental order, and not of any thing which takes place out of it and above it. We speak of secondary relations and agency; and not of him, who, in being the primary agent, is the life of the mind itself. We say, therefore, that, in the order of mental succession, and in the gradation of mental influence, faith stands *first*; first in time, and first in power; and that, in this view of the subject, we may properly speak of faith as having a creative agency, and as making a new heart. If faith be imperfect in degree, it will of course be followed by imperfect issues; it will make a heart imperfect as itself. But if it be strong, if it be assured, it will give a strong, an assured heart. If it be Abraham's faith, it will give Abraham's heart. If it be Paul's faith, it will give Paul's heart. If it be the faith which Christ had, a faith, which Satan's arts could not shake, and man's hostility could not perplex, and even the hiding of his Father's countenance, could not discourage, we cannot hesitate to say with reverential gratitude, that it will give Christ's consecrated heart; a heart which never falters in the cause of truth and

duty ; a heart that can be nailed to the Cross for God's name and God's glory.

8.—And this takes place, as we have already intimated, not accidentally, but by an immutable law. Eternal law is at the bottom ; and, therefore, eternal truth is in it. It is the law of men, the law of angels ; and we might add, with the simple modification that what is faith in the human mind becomes knowledge in the divine mind, that it is the law of God. God loves, and he *can* love, only what he knows to be a proper object of love. In men, who are not the subjects of absolute knowledge, faith takes the place of such knowledge ; and they love, and *can* love, only as they believe. “Believe,” says Archbishop Leighton, “and you shall love. Believe much, and you shall love much.” And carrying out the principle to its legitimate issues, I think we may add with safety, Believe with all your powers of belief, and you will love with all your powers of love. Believe with assurance of faith, and you will love with assurance of love. In other words, believe perfectly, and you will love perfectly.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

FAITH THE TRUE BOND OF UNION BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

Faith the bond of man's union with God. Difficulty of reconciling God's supremacy with man's moral responsibility. Inward life, which is not from God, the same thing with spiritual death. The true life is from God. The life of God in the soul implies concurrence or union with God, which exists by faith alone. And existing in this manner, it leaves all the glory with God. The subject illustrated from the case of a beggar.

AMONG the various views, in which it is interesting to contemplate the subject of faith, there is one, which seems to us to be especially worthy of notice. We have reference to the fact, that it is faith, more than any thing else, which constitutes the true bond of union between God and man.

2.—If God in his supremacy is first in time and first in power, if the true and only source of existence of power to all other beings resides in himself as necessarily involved in his own infinite nature; in other words, if God is God, then all other beings and all other things, sin only excepted, are from him and by him. It becomes, then, a great prob-

lem, in what way this supremacy, without which God cannot be God, shall exist and operate in God's moral creatures, giving them life and power, and sustaining the life and power which it gives, and yet without a violation of their moral responsibility. In other words, the question or problem is, in what way shall men, consistently with their moral identity and responsibility, enter, (as all Christians who experience the highest results of religion do enter,) into the state of entire moral union or oneness with God.

3.—And in connection with the remarks appropriate to this inquiry, we observe in the first place, that men may be said to have a life in themselves. And it may be said further, with great truth undoubtedly, that they may not only have a life in themselves, but that they may be free in it, and that they may be responsible for it. But if this life in themselves is a life self-originated, if it be a life out of God and independent of God, as the terms seem to imply, then the stream is severed from its fountain, the bond of spiritual filiation is broken, and there is, and can be no real, no essential union. Such a life is not what the pious Scougal calls the "life of God in the soul of man." And we cannot hesitate to say, that all moral life, wherever it may exist, is no better and no other, than moral and spiritual death, which is not drawn, moment by moment, from a divine source.

4.—But if there is a life, which is no better than spiritual death, there is also another life of higher and divine origin. This life, which is God's power,

God's wisdom, and God's heart of love, existing and operating in the very nature, and amid, if we may so express it, the very responsibilities of the human soul, exists and operates by *faith*. If, renouncing our own strength and wisdom, we give ourselves to God, believing that he will be our strength, our wisdom, and our righteousness, according to the promise he has given, we may be assured that the result in our inward experience will correspond to the faith we exercise. But a soul, which combines righteousness or entire uprightness and purity of feeling with a divinely enlightened wisdom and a strength of purpose that aims unceasingly to do what the inward divine teaching imposes, is a soul that is stamped with the divine image, and has entered into true unity with God. It is in connection with such views as these, therefore, that we assert the proposition, which is the subject of this chapter, viz. *that faith is the true bond of union between God and man*.

5.—And in illustration of the subject, we remark further, that, in renouncing our own strength and any thing else which may be regarded as pertaining to ourselves, it is not meant, that we should be inactive and not employ those powers which God has given us ; but that in their exercise, we should have no hope, no confidence in them, except so far as they exist in co-operation with an inward divine guidance, and are attended with the divine blessing ; in other words, we should have no confidence in them, except so far as the human operation is one with the divine operation. Or to express the same thing again, in another shape, the great business of the

creature is, not to be without action, but to act in concurrence with God, to harmonize with God. This was the prayer of the Savior, "as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also *may be one in us.*" To express the whole as simply and briefly as possible, the sum of religion is unity with God. And this unity, which cannot exist without the concurrence of the creature, is secured by faith. It is not possible for God to be in union with any being, that has not confidence in him. A want of confidence, which is the same thing as a want of faith, is itself disunion.

6.—Faith, then, is the tie, which binds us to our Maker. It does it effectually; and no other principle can take its place, or fulfil its office. And there is one reason for this remark, which should be noticed here. Faith can harmonize man with his Maker, and make him the recipient of what is necessary for the restoration and perfection of his nature, without involving the idea or the fact of moral merit on man's part. That is to say, having strength, having wisdom, or any other inward and Christian grace from God in the exercise of faith, we cannot, as Christians, speak of it as our own wisdom and our own strength, and consequently cannot appropriate to ourselves any merit nor lay claim to any reward. And yet, in renouncing ourselves and in harmonizing with God in the exercise of faith, simple as these mental operations appear to be, and as they are in fact, there is obviously so much of free and of positive action as to involve and to secure our moral responsibility.

7.—A beggar at a certain time, hungry and destitute of clothing, went and asked aid from another person. He asked in *faith*; that is to say, he asked in the exercise of entire confidence both in the ability and in the benevolent disposition of the person, to whom the application was made. And his faith being rightly placed, he received in accordance with his faith. But in thus placing himself in harmonious relation with the donor, viz.: in corresponding, in his sense of need, in his willingness to receive, and in the exercise of faith, with the donor's generous disposition, no one can suppose that he ceased to exercise his own agency or to possess moral responsibility; and at the same time, being a mere recipient, no one can suppose, that he had any merit, which could detract from the fullness and freeness of the gift, or which could entitle him to reward. And so in the relations existing between man and God. If our own minds, in the sense of want and in the exercise of faith, are put into harmony and union with the Divine Mind, we shall receive what we need; but, being recipients and not the donor, we shall feel, as the beggar did, that the merit of all our mercies is in the giver of them; and at the same time it will be true, that we shall receive them without any infringement or loss of personal agency and accountability.

8.—It is desirable, that these views and principles should be remembered. They aid in justifying the representations of Scripture, which every where and most emphatically ascribe man's spiritual restoration to

faith. Nor can any other principle, considered as standing first and standing alone, take its place. Even the principle of love, noble and divine as it is, could not unite the soul to God, and could not even be pleasing to God, without faith as its antecedent and basis. In the full possession of faith, we at once enter into harmony with God, and we necessarily exercise, on their appropriate occasions, all those affections which are desirable. By a law of its own nature it propagates every thing else from its own bosom. Having once come into existence under the divine inspiration, it may be said instrumentally and in the natural filiation of the mental exercises, to make all, to secure all. But without faith, whatever else he may have, man is left of God and left of happiness.

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

OF FAITH IN CONNECTION WITH JUSTIFICATION.

Of justification. Men are justified by faith. No other way of justification. Justification by faith implies the feeling of self-renunciation. Not possible to be otherwise. Self-renunciation involved also in sanctifying exercises.

FAITH is a principle, as intimated in the close of the last chapter, which does not stand alone. It always has an object ; and always has results. In connection, therefore, with our general doctrine, that faith is the source of feeling both natural and religious, and that it is the great foundation of the religious life, we proceed to say further, that one of the remarkable results of faith, considered as the means of spiritual restoration and renovation, is, that it frees us from that condemnation, which is brought upon us by reason of sin. In other words, we are JUSTIFIED by faith.

2.—Believing themselves to be sinners, believing Jesus Christ to be the propitiation for sins, and accepting salvation through his merits alone, men are forgiven, and are treated, in reference to the law of God, as if they had not sinned against it. In other

words, they are justified. The creature, who has violated the divine law, is the subject of justification; God, in connection with the administration of his government and the arrangement of his providences, is the author of it; but still, being justified in the manner which has been mentioned, viz. : by trusting in Christ alone, men are properly said to be justified by faith.

3.—Nor is there any other way of its being done. Justification, in the scripture sense of the term, always implies forgiveness or pardon. Forgiveness or pardon, as the terms themselves imply, is a free gift. At the same time, such are the relations existing among moral beings, that such forgiveness cannot, in the spiritual sense, be made available to the subject or recipient of it without confidence or faith existing on the part of such subject towards the author. A pardon, which is spiritually available, one which is desirable and valuable in the spiritual or religious sense, is a pardon, which results in entire reconciliation between the parties. But it is self-evident, if we could suppose forgiveness or pardon to exist without faith or confidence on the part of the subject of it, (for instance, without faith in the kind intentions of the being offering the pardon and without faith in his power of making it good,) that it would fail to result in mutual reconciliation, in the reciprocation of benevolent feelings, and in true happiness. On a favorable construction of it, it would be merely forgiveness intentional and inchoate; existing exclusively in the mind of the author; without counterpart, and without completion. From the nature of

the case, therefore, a man cannot be pardoned or forgiven, to any available spiritual purpose, without faith ; and consequently he cannot be justified without faith.

4.—But justification by faith involves one important mental element, which has sometimes been overlooked. We cannot better describe it, than by calling it the feeling of self-renunciation. A willingness to acknowledge our nakedness, blindness, and want ; and to receive, with the helplessness of little children, whatever may be necessary for us from another. This feeling of self-renunciation is involved in the act of faith ; or more properly and truly, it is antecedent and prerequisite to it. In other words, we must cease to believe in ourselves as a ground of hope, we must cease to believe in our own merits and our own strength as a source of salvation, before it is possible for us to believe, in a scriptural manner, in Christ as a source of salvation and as a ground of hope.

5.—The feeling of personal renunciation is a mental element in the process of justification, which, as we have already intimated, has sometimes been overlooked. But we cannot hesitate in saying, that it is an element, which cannot be dispensed with, consistently with realizing the great spiritual result, which the term justification expresses. It is of the nature of a contradiction in terms, to say that a man can be justified by faith, and at the same time be justified by any way or method besides faith. Justification by faith negatives and denies, in the necessary import of the expressions themselves, any and every other method of justification.

When we are justified by faith, we not only have faith in Christ, as the propitiation for sins in general ; but, appropriating this propitiation to our own necessities, we believe in him as a Savior from our own sins. But it is obvious, that, if we believe in Christ as our Savior, we do not believe in *ourselves* as our Savior, nor in our own efforts as our Savior, nor in any system of human effort and instrumentality, nor in any saving efficacy whatever *out of him*. That is to say, it is obviously implied in the very act of faith, that we renounce ourselves ; that we feel, in respect to our salvation, that in ourselves we are nothing.

6.—And this feeling of self-renunciation, as we shall have occasion to notice more particularly in the succeeding chapter, which is antecedent to the faith that justifies, is also antecedent and prerequisite to the faith which sanctifies ; and perhaps we may add, is prerequisite to every gracious exercise, which is involved in sanctification. The truly holy soul, that has renounced the falsity and the bitterness of self-reliance, understands this. Such a soul feels itself to be, because it is so in fact, under the inspiration and movement of a power out of itself and above itself ; although it may be said, at the same time, to be a power dwelling within it. In the spirit and in the language of a devout person, who had known what it was to renounce self in order to receive God, it would rather be lost than be saved, would rather be cast out than received into favor, by any means which would exclude the divine operation, and which would *not give God all the glory*.

CHAPTER NINTH.

OF FAITH IN CONNECTION WITH SANCTIFICATION.

Of the difference existing between justification and sanctification. They differ, but are closely connected, in some respects. Both states are sustained by faith. Both imply renunciation. Remarks on moral responsibility. The consent of the creature given in connection with the grace of God.

JUSTIFICATION and sanctification, although they have some things in common, are, nevertheless, to be regarded, as different from each other. Justification, while it does not exclude the present, has special reference to the past. Sanctification, on the contrary, taking up the work, which justification has begun, has a more distinct reference to the present and the future. And accordingly, the one may be supposed to inquire, how the sins, which have been committed in times past, shall be forgiven; while it is the office of the other to inquire, how we shall be kept from sin at the present moment and in time to come. Or, stating the distinction between them in a little different manner, we may perhaps say, that justification removes the con-

demnatory power or guilt of sin, while sanctification removes the power of sin itself. The one pardons ; the other purifies. The one takes away guilt ; the other takes away transgression. The one commences the union with God by forgiveness ; the other continues it by securing conformity to the divine will. The one is incipient, and terminates in a particular result ; the other may be said to be progressive without end.

2.—There can be no doubt, therefore, that justification and sanctification differ from each other. At the same time, it seems to be equally true that in some respects they are closely allied, and sustain a near resemblance. And in particular, they both come into existence, and are both sustained, in connection with the same mighty principle, viz. : by faith. The doctrine of justification by faith may be regarded as a doctrine generally conceded and settled. And when the subject has been fully examined, we cannot well doubt, that the doctrine of sanctification in the same manner, viz. : by *faith*, will be conceded and established with equal weight of evidence, and with equal unanimity of opinion. We begin to live by faith ; and we continue to live in the same methods, which made the beginning. We received forgiveness in the first instance by faith ; and in the reception of any and every spiritual favor, which may be necessary in our further progress, and which may properly be included under the general grace of sanctification, we need the same faith. “Christ has truly loved me,” says Hermann Francke, “and washed me in his blood, *so that*

my salvation is rendered sure, through grace. My beginning, *progress*, and *ending*, is by FAITH in Jesus Christ. When I feel my utter inability, and acknowledge that I can do nothing of myself, and cast myself upon his mercy alone, I feel a new power of communication to my soul. I do not seek to be justified in one way, *and sanctified in another.*"*

3.—Of the truth of this general view, established as it is by the experience of holy men in all ages of the church, there can be no reasonable doubt; viz.: as we begin to live by faith, so we must continue to live by faith. If we need wisdom, for instance, (as every person, who strives to live the divine life, does need it,) we can obtain it in no other way, than by asking for it in the exercise of FAITH; that is to say, believing that God, in accordance with his promise, a promise which has its foundation in the atoning merits of Christ, will give all that wisdom which is necessary for us. If we need support in temptation, (as every person in the present state of existence does need it,) we must ask for such support in the same spirit of filial confidence, without any of those misgivings and doubts, which are the opposites of faith, and we shall have it. If we need a will resigned to God in the endurance of trial or a will conformed to God's will in the discharge of duty, and will only look to God for it, fully believing in him as true to his own character and declarations, he cannot, and will not disappoint us. There is no mistake,

* *Memoirs of Augustus Hermann Francke, Chap. 2d.*

no uncertainty. It is not a result, which is accidental or contingent, which may be or may not be ; it is just as certain as it is, that God is infinite ; and that being what he is, he exists in order to communicate the blessedness of his own nature to others, and that all subordinate beings exist, and can exist, so far as they exist in the divine image, only by receiving from him.

4.—The states of justification and sanctification agree with each other not only in being sustained by faith, but by being characterized by the same mental elements in other respects. If, for instance, it is true, as it undoubtedly is, that, in experiencing the state of justification, we are brought to feel, that we cannot obtain forgiveness without self-renunciation, it is equally true, that in sanctification we must have the same feeling in reference to every thing that is necessary for us ; in other words, we must feel, that we cannot seek any thing and cannot obtain any thing from God, so long as we cherish the secret expectation of aid from some other source ; and that reliance upon God necessarily implies the renouncement of ourselves.

5.—Another mental element, which is involved in sanctification, as well as in justification, is a willingness to receive. We may suppose a person, although perhaps it is not likely to be the case, willing to renounce himself and his own efforts as a ground of hope ; and still not willing to receive all from God. It is impossible, that such a soul should exercise that faith, which results in forgiveness and reconciliation. It is necessary that he should not only renounce himself as a

ground of hope, but every thing else besides God and out of God ; and be willing to be saved, both from the guilt of the past and from present sin, by God's grace and in God's way. To renounce ourselves, therefore, in every thing, our merit, our wisdom, our strength, and whatever else we had called and valued as our own, to renounce all other created and subordinate grounds of hope, and humbly, and willingly to receive every thing, our salvation, our Christian graces, our temporal and spiritual guidance, and whatever else may be necessary for us, from God alone in the exercise of simple faith ; it is this, as it seems to us, and nothing different from this, and nothing short of this, which constitutes, both in its commencement and progress, the life of the children of God.

6.—But what is to be said, in this case, of human freedom and human responsibility ? If our dependence upon God is to be so strict, and our self-renunciation is to be so entire, is there good reason for regarding man as a being, either possessed of the elements, or responsible for the fact of moral accountability ? This is an inquiry, which has already been anticipated, in part, in a former chapter. The simple truth is, that God never has violated ; he never will violate ; and while he remains what he is, he never can violate the moral freedom of his creatures. He gave them moral freedom ; and the gift itself is the pledge of its protection. This freedom he is bound by the very elements of his nature to respect sacredly and to respect always. Being what he is, he is not so weak in principle as to

violate his own implied promise ; nor, considered as the superior, and man as the dependent, is he so poor in character as to be satisfied with a homage, which is not voluntarily rendered. To be saved from sin and to be brought into moral harmony with the Divine Mind, without a recognition of moral freedom, would in our apprehension, be in the nature of a contradiction in terms ; and would, in reality, be neither salvation to men nor honor to God. It is, therefore, left to men, and left to all moral beings throughout the universe, to decide, (and it is a question which is always and necessarily decided one way or the other,) whether they will be saved by the divine operation alone, or will attempt to save themselves by their own efforts. If they consent to be thus saved, in other words if they give themselves up to God to be saved in his own way and manner, then they live by the presence and the agency of the divine operation ; or in the expression of the Scriptures by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost ; but if they do not consent, they live, as Satan and all other rebellious spirits do, by the operation of unavailing and destructive efforts generated out of self. But where consent is given, so that the divine operation may be in harmony with the mental laws, moral freedom is unimpaired.

7.—And this is especially true, when it is considered, that the act of consent is not the same thing as a cessation or annihilation of action ; it is not a mere absence or negation of mental movement ; but is a real or positive act on the part of the creature ; one which

may be specifically described as an act of harmonious concurrence and cooperation, with the divine act. And what is worthy of notice, and is especially important here, this consentient and concurrent act is repeated in all time to come; existing always in immediate consecution with the divine influence, moment by moment. It is in this position of the two minds, the Divine Mind, and created minds, (a position which reconciles the two otherwise antagonistical ideas of God's gift and man's free reception,) that grace is communicated. The idea of grace imparted or infused in any other manner, the idea of grace *enforced*, the idea of saving men against their own consent, involves an absurdity. Salvation is nothing else, and can be nothing else, than harmony with God. But harmony without consent would be an adjustment of conceptions not more free from absurdity, than that of love without affection.

8.—The soul, in the case under consideration, does not, by any physical union with God, cease to exist as a soul; nor do its acts cease to exist as the soul's acts; but it differs from the unregenerated and the unsanctified soul in this respect, that it exists and acts in harmonious cooperation with divine grace imparted; consenting to receive what God chooses to bestow; consenting to be nothing, that God may be all. But we ought to add, (a circumstance which will perhaps meet a difficulty existing in the minds of some,) that this consent is not very explicit, not very formal. It is an act of the soul, so quiet, so remote from general notice, so comparatively indistinct in our consciousness, that it

might almost be said to exist by implication merely. In truth, however, the act is something more than implied; it has a positive existence, whether we have a distinct perception of it or not. And it is comparatively lost to our notice, and ceases in a great degree to occupy our attention, only because our attention is taken up with the divine visitant who has entered.

9.—The doctrine, which is proposed in these remarks, is not a new one. It is hardly necessary to say, that it is the ancient, and to the holy soul the cherished doctrine of antecedent or “preventing” grace. A doctrine, there is some reason to fear, better understood formerly than at present; and always, it is to be lamented, more distinctly recognized in theological speculation, than thoroughly applied in Christian practice. It cannot be too often brought to notice, that the great business of man, as it is of all moral beings, is, not a cessation of action; and still less is it an independent action; but is an action in cooperation with God. And this may be said, (so great is the condescension of our heavenly Father,) to make the work of man with God a sort of partnership. But still it should ever be remembered, that it is a species of partnership, existing on the condition, (the only condition which God can ever recognize,) that it shall be God’s part to give, and man’s part to receive.

CHAPTER TENTH.

OF APPROPRIATING FAITH.

Appropriating faith correctly understood in connection with other modifications of faith. Historical faith. Illustrations of a faith in the Savior, which is purely historical. Of that faith, which may be called a general religious faith. A faith of this kind, and which goes no further, practically useless. Of appropriating faith. Its nature and necessity.

THERE is a form or modification of faith, which may properly be termed appropriating faith. In giving an account of the principles and doctrines of faith, we could not well omit saying something of this form of its action.

2.—We would remark, in the first place, that the phrase, appropriating faith, does not indicate a faith, which is different in its kind or nature from any other faith. Faith, in its nature, is always the same. It indicates a form or modification of faith, however, which should not be confounded with other forms. Appropriating faith is a faith, which considers the object of faith, the thing believed in, whatever it may be, *in its relation to ourselves*. But in order more fully

to understand this statement, perhaps we should say here, that there are three distinct modifications of faith, which may properly be noticed, in connection with each other, viz.: historical faith, a general religious faith, and that more specific or appropriating faith, which we have at present under consideration.

3.—Historical faith, as that phrase is usually employed by theologians, is faith in the facts, persons, and events, which are mentioned in the Bible, considered merely as matters or subjects of history. The Bible has a historical, as well as a religious value. No reason can be given, so far as we can perceive, why the Bible, in its purely historical parts, should not be placed upon the same footing with the other historical narrations of antiquity. Statements, for instance, which are made in the Bible, and which are as well authenticated as other historical statements, furnish us with an account of Jesus Christ, gravely and specifically, much as is done in other historical narrations. And the person, who has faith in the historical narrations of profane antiquity, who believes in the existence of such men as Hannibal and the Scipios and in other historical personages, cannot well doubt, certainly not with any obvious consistency, the truth and facts of the evangelical statements.

4.—An historical faith in the Savior, in accordance with the view just given, is a faith or belief, that such a man as Jesus Christ, possessing many of the virtuous traits, which his biographers have ascribed to him, appeared in Palestine at the commencement of the

Christian era. It is the same species of faith, with which we believe in the existence of the Tituses, Vespasians, and other distinguished historical personages of the same period. This sort of faith, however, which has reference merely to the fact of his existence and to his general character, does not necessarily involve the existence of religion, or even of good morals. A man may be vicious in his character, or without being an immoral man, he may entirely reject Christ in his more important religious aspects and relations, and at the same time believe in him historically. And this was the case, as is well known, with Voltaire, with Diderot, and other distinguished opponents of the Christian system, who readily yielded their assent to the historical matter of fact, that Jesus Christ lived at a certain period of the world, that he was a wise and virtuous man, and that he was put to death by the Jews under the procurate of Pontius Pilate. But a faith, which stops at the historical facts, without recognizing the moral and religious relations and issues involved in them, (and this is always the case with the mere historical faith,) is obviously of no religious value.

5.—There is also a general religious faith. “A person may not only believe,” repeating here the brief exposition of this subject which we have found it necessary to give in another Work,* “with those, who possess an historical faith, that there was such a man as Jesus Christ; but may also believe, that he died for the sal-

* Principles of the Interior Life, Pt. I. ch. 5. 2d Ed.

vation of men in general. This form of faith, it is true, is important; but it does not and cannot secure all those objects which are ascribed to faith in the Bible. I suppose it may be said with truth, that the devils believe and know; not only that there was such a being as Jesus Christ, but that he died upon the cross for sinners. It obviously does not commend itself to human reason, and still less to the Word of God, to say that a man has *saving* faith, who merely believes in Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world, so far as the world receives him in that capacity; but without receiving and believing in him as a Savior in his own case.

A faith of this kind, and which goes no further than this, is practically DEAD. And perhaps it may be said here, that the great sin of the people of our own age is, not that they have merely an *historical* faith and stop in that, as in some former corrupt periods; but that they too often rest satisfied with a general and abstract faith, which is theoretically applicable to the world at large, without bringing it home to *themselves*. They believe in the general truth, without making a specific and personal application; and thus serve Satan as effectually, as far as they are personally concerned, as if they had only an historical faith.

6.—A third form or modification of the great principle of faith, is what may be called APPROPRIATING FAITH. The necessity of this form of faith is evident from even a slight consideration of the subject. The usual understanding is, with the exception of those who hold strictly to a limited atonement, that our Savior has

provided a common salvation, adequate to the wants of all ; but available only in the case of those who exercise faith. How far this salvation will practically extend ; how many individuals will avail themselves of it ; why some are taken and others are left, we cannot tell ; nor is it very obvious, that it is important for us to know. But certain it is, that no one will accept of the provision which is made, without faith. But what sort of faith ? The answer is, It is that which can speak in the first person ; that which has an appropriating power ; that which can say I have sinned ; I have need of this salvation ; I take it home to myself. It is not enough for me to say, I believe that Christ died for others ; I must also believe that he died for me individually, and accept of him as *my* Savior. It is not meant by this, that previous to the exercise of appropriating faith, and independently of such exercise, we have a special or particular interest in Christ, separate from and above that of others ; and that appropriating faith consists in believing in this special or particular interest. An appropriating faith of this kind, and operating in this manner, might be very dangerous. It is merely meant, that out of the common interest, which is broad as the human race, we may, by means of faith, take individually that which the gospel permits us to receive and regard as our own ; and that we can avail ourselves of this common interest, so as to make it personally our own, in no other way.

God deals with us, (certainly for the most part,) as *individuals*, and not in masses. When he requires men

to repent of sin, to exercise gratitude, to love, and the like, the requisition is obviously made upon them as *individuals*, as separate from and as independent of others. It is not possible to conceive of any other way, in which obedience to the requisition can be rendered. Nor is it conceivable that the remedial effect of the atonement should be realized in any other way than this. How is it possible, if I, in my own person, have suffered the wound of sin, that a remedy, which is general and does not admit of any specific and personal appropriation, should answer my purpose? Furthermore, in dying for all, in other words, in furnishing a common salvation, available to all on their acceptance of the same, Christ necessarily died for me as an individual, since the common mass or race of men is made up of individuals, and since I am one of that common mass or race. And indeed we can have no idea of a community or mass of men, except as a congregation or collection of separate persons. In dying for the whole on certain conditions, he necessarily, therefore, on the same conditions, died for the individuals composing that whole.

It would seem to follow, then, from what has been said, that the faith, which we especially need, is a personal or appropriating faith; a faith which will disintegrate us from the mass, and will enable us to take Christ home in all his offices to our own business and our own bosoms. We must be enabled to say, if we would realize the astonishing cleansing and healing efficacy there is in the gospel, of God that he is *MY* God, of the Savior that he is *MY* Savior. We must be

enabled to lay hold of the blessed promises, and exclaim, these are the gift of MY Father, these are the purchase of MY Savior, these are meant for ME.

It was thus, that patriarchs, prophets, and apostles believed. This was the faith of those consecrated ones, of whom the world was not worthy, recorded in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. Hear the language of the Psalmist as an illustration of what is to be found frequently in the Scriptures. How precise, how personal, how remote from unmeaning generalities. "I will love thee, O Lord, MY strength. The Lord is MY rock, and MY fortress, and MY deliverer; MY God, MY strength, in whom I will trust; MY buckler and the horn of MY salvation, and MY high tower." And it is worthy of notice, that the first word of the Lord's prayer has this appropriating character: "OUR Father, who art in heaven."

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

THE LIFE OF FAITH AS DISTINGUISHED FROM A LIFE OF INWARD SIGNS AND MANIFESTATIONS.

All true religion has its foundation in faith. Visions, trances, revelations, and the like, are not necessarily religion. Historical illustrations of the subject. Origin of the experiences and states of mind which have been referred to. Reasons for not regarding them as true religious experience. Remarks on emotional experience. Extract from Romaine.

It will be in accordance with what has already been said, and perhaps merely a statement of the same thing in other words, when we remark here, that no other form or modification of the inward life, can, with any truth or any safety, be substituted for the life of faith. The proposition thus stated in this general manner, viz. that no other modification of the inward life can properly or safely be substituted for the life of faith, will probably be assented to by nearly all persons, although they may not agree in its particular applications. If the life of faith is the true life, if in its results it develops and explains every thing that is true, good, and lovely in the characters and actions of holy men, it would

seem to be a matter of course, that every thing else, which claims to be religion *independently of faith as its basis*, must be regarded as setting up claims or pretensions, that are false or unfounded.

2.—We proceed to remark, therefore, in accordance with this general statement, that those things, whether experienced in a greater or less degree, which are of the nature of visions, trances, revelations of the heavenly world or of the world of woe, revelations of future things, and the like, do not, and cannot, in themselves considered, constitute religion. About the year 1688, a religious sect appeared in Dauphiny and Vivarais in France, and afterwards, about the year 1700, the same sect made its appearance in England, whose religious experience, in addition to, or perhaps we should rather say, in distinction from the common traits of religious experience, was characterized by trances, as they were called, in which they alleged that they saw the heavens open, and saw the angels of heaven, and saw paradise, and hell, and other things equally wonderful. Nor was this all. Their experience, in the case of a considerable number of persons, was distinguished also by prophetic views or foresights of future things. The state of trance, which can easily be explained, to a considerable degree at least, on purely natural principles, and also other states which were characterized by great physical agitation, were frequently followed by prophetic paroxysms, which when they came to the utterance, resulted either in strong and terrible denunciations, or in predictions of future events. Some interesting speci-

mens of these prophecies are found in the Work, entitled the Prophecies of Sir John Lacy, a worthy man of some education and of irreproachable character, who was subject, in a remarkable degree, to all these forms of experience. A similar sect sprang up in certain parts of Germany about the year 1730, called the Church or Congregation of the Inspired. It is related of Count Zinzendorf, the founder of the Church of the United Brethren or the Moravian Church, as it is more usually called, that he made a visit to the Church of the Inspired in the principality of Isenberg, and obviously for the purpose of ascertaining the nature of their doctrines and exercises. The Count, speaking of what he himself witnessed in one of their leading men, whose character and exercises he had an opportunity of studying, both at Isenberg and elsewhere, says, that "he fell into one of his inspired fits in Budingen, which I thought dreadful. The manner was this. He suddenly became violently convulsed, and at the same time he moved his head backwards and forwards with incredible rapidity. In this state he spoke certain words in a prophetic style, which were termed inspirations. They were written down, and sent to the people to whom they referred." * The Count, after having examined the doctrine in connection with the commentary of its practical exhibitions and results, says, "I had no occasion to hesitate any longer, in entirely rejecting the inspiration."

* Life of Count Zinzendorf, Lond. Ed. 1838, p. 130.

3.—The statements of ecclesiastical history furnish evidence, conclusive as it is melancholy, that, in almost every age since the time of the Apostles, there have been individuals, who have professed to be the subjects of revelations; persons, to whom God, according to their own ideas of things, has made special communications, and who, accordingly, have assumed, in a greater or less degree, the prophetic character. The age, in which we live, distinguished as it is, by philosophic advancement and by enlightened views on the subject of religion, has been, as it seems to us, distinguished also by the multiplication of instances of this kind. On every side, and in almost all Christian denominations, persons have made their appearance, who have regarded themselves as the subjects of special divine communications. Not the mere subjects of things religiously experienced in the heart; that is not what we mean; but of things supernaturally communicated to the intellect; not the mere subjects of holiness in exercise, but of revelations exteriorly imparted. We do not mean to imply, that these persons were not Christians; we have no doubt that in some cases they were; but we do mean to imply and to say, that their Christianity, their religion, existed, and must have existed independently of their gift or supposed gift of revelations.

4.—It is a matter of notoriety, that the persons, to whom we now refer, have been in the habit not only of uttering predictions of future events; but have also undertaken to pronounce authoritatively upon some

things in present existence, which are ordinarily withdrawn from notice ; such as the present state of the inward moral and religious character of individuals, and their acceptance with God or their rejection. In many instances the results of their confident anticipations and predictions have shown, that the remarkable visitations and revelations, which they professed to have, and which it is possible that they very sincerely professed to have, were not from God. But if it had been otherwise, in other words if their statements and predictions had been fulfilled, it would not alter the general truth of our proposition. God if he chooses may select those, who are his enemies, to be the depository of his revelations ; but their designation to this office, although it is perhaps out of the ordinary course of his proceedings, does not necessarily make them his friends. Saul was at one time numbered among the prophets. And Balaam, the son of Beor, “ fell into a trance, having his eyes open ;” and the declarations, which he then heard, he seems to have been authorized to utter as the predictions of the Most High.

5.—We might enter into the question of the origin of these rather remarkable states of mind, and institute the inquiry, whether we are to regard them, in the present age of the world, as having their origin in the inspirations of God, or in the suggestions of Satan, or in the movements of a strongly disordered physical system operating upon, or in connection with, a highly excited state of the intellect and the feelings. But without entering into this inquiry, which, interesting

and important as it undoubtedly is, would occupy too much time, what we have to remark here is, that the decisive circumstance, unfavorable to this form of Christian experience, if by courtesy we may call it such, is this : *that, in itself considered, it is wholly intellectual.* Visions, trances, revelations, and all other things, which are exteriorly imparted without being inwardly and operatively experienced, communicating new and perhaps remarkable views without changing the dispositions of the heart, are just what they are and just what their names indicate ; *but they are not religion.* They may be regarded, if any one chooses so to regard them, as constituting an intellectual experience, or still more definitely as constituting an “*apparitional*” experience ; but we repeat, that, in themselves considered, they do not and cannot constitute *religion*. If a man has a trance, a vision, and especially if he has a *revelation*, and can sustain it by such miracles as sustained the divine messages of Christ and the Apostles, we readily admit, that he is entitled to a hearing. But, in the first place, we know of no such cases. And in the second place, if we did, it would furnish no decisive grounds of inference in favor of the piety of such persons. It leaves the case just where it found it. And simply for the reason already indicated, viz. that these things are “*apparitional*” and intellectual, are addressed to the senses and the external perceptions, and do not penetrate the region of the heart. Isaiah, and Ezekiel, and Daniel, and Peter, and John, and Paul, experienced God’s favor and were

his beloved and adopted children, not exclusively or chiefly because they had visions and proclaimed God's revealed messages and wrought God's miracles; (missions and attributes, which, so far as we can perceive, might have been assigned to other less holy persons or even to unholy persons,) but because, they had given themselves to God in consecration and in faith, because their hearts were sanctified and their wills were subdued.

6.—There is another class of persons, whose experience is something more than intellectual; but which, just so far as it exists *independently of faith as its basis*, cannot safely or justly be regarded, as a true religious experience. We refer to those, whose religious life is characterized chiefly or exclusively by strong emotions. These cases are in some respects more difficult to be rightly estimated than those which have just been mentioned. It is well known, that many persons find it difficult to form an idea of religion separate from feeling; and they are very apt to consider great feeling and great religion as very much the same thing. In many minds religion and feeling are almost identical. But it will be noticed in the proposition, which we have laid down, that we do not condemn feeling, that we do not exclude feeling as a part of religious experience, but only that we condemn and exclude from religious experience all that feeling, *which exists independently of faith as its basis*. I have somewhere seen the remark, and it seems to me that there is a foundation for it, although it is obviously liable to be misunderstood, that we are not saved by

feeling, but by faith. A proposition, which implies, that the primary element, the foundation of salvation, so far as the human mind is concerned, is faith, without excluding feeling in its appropriate place, viz. as sometimes antecedent and preparatory, and more frequently as a subsequent and accessory state of mind. As a general rule, the order of sequence is, faith first, and feeling afterwards. Religious faith will not only give religious feeling on its appropriate occasions; but it will give the right form or modification of feeling; in other words, precisely that modification of feeling, which the occasion requires.

7.—We should be sorry to have it understood, as implied in these remarks, that we object absolutely and in all respects to what may be denominated emotional religion, or rather to emotions as involved in and considered as a part of religion. Emotions, excited states of feeling, even of mere natural or animal feeling, may precede faith, and may be valuable in preparing the way for it; or they may be subsequent to it, and may oftentimes result from it. The emotions in their various kinds, both joyous and sorrowful, arise on many occasions very different from each other; and oftentimes have nothing to do with religion; and at their best estate may be regarded merely as the attendants and accessories of religion. The true view, therefore, is, that emotional states, or mere temporary feelings of joy and sorrow in distinction from the permanent state of love, may or may not involve the fact of religion. The man, who has them, may possess religion, or he may be

destitute of it. In forming a judgment, therefore, of a man's religious character from his joys or his sorrows, however excited and raised they may be, (for it is to joys and sorrows that we have special reference when we speak of emotional states,) it is necessary to be very careful. But no man need be solicitous in respect to the reality and truth of his religion, whether his joys or his sorrows be more or less, who, having entirely renounced himself, has that faith in God, which works by love and purifies the heart.

8.—We would make an additional remark here. It is this. Religious emotions, whenever they make their appearance, should be so kept under control, as never to disturb the calmness of the perceptive and rational action of the mind. And the reason of the remark is this. True religion always has relation to the will of God. It implies conformity to the will of God ; and conformity implies a knowledge of such will. But it is very obvious, that, considered as rational and accountable beings, we cannot be supposed to know, and that we cannot by any possibility know the divine will by means of mere instinct, by means of mere impulse, or of some strong and unregulated feeling. By such means merely it would be impossible for us to learn even the letters and the simple narratives of a child's spelling book ; much less the moral and religious facts and relations, upon which hang the results of an eternal existence. The will of God can be known by the human soul only in connection with the exercise of the judgment ; in other words, by means of those perceptive

and rational powers, which are a part of our nature. Powers, which cannot act clearly, efficiently, and satisfactorily, in connection with a violent and agitated state of the emotions. Hence, when God dwells in the soul by the proper possession and regulation of its powers, it will be peaceful.

9.—The emotional part of religion, in distinction from that part of it, which consists in entire consecration and unwavering faith, often occasions a degree of perplexity even to very devout minds. Brainerd, the celebrated missionary among the North American Indians, was out of health at a certain time; so much so as to be very weak, and “unable to do his work.” Remarking in his Diary upon his feelings at this time, he says, “As I was able to do little or nothing, so I enjoyed not much spirituality, or lively religious affection.”* What shall we say of such an instance as this. It seems to me we should say, and we cannot very safely say either more or less, that he was afflicted, but not cast off; in sorrow, but not forgotten. In other words, that being wearied and sick in body, and overwhelmed in mind with the responsibilities of his situation, he had less of joyful emotions than at other times, emotions which vary very much with our physical and mental trials, but not that he really had less spirituality, less religion, or that he was less the subject of God’s love.

* Life of Brainerd, Ch. IX.

CHAPTER TWELFTH.

ON THE LAW OF HABIT IN CONNECTION WITH FAITH.

All exercises of the human mind have their laws. Of the law of habit. Of willing or resolving to believe. Illustration of the subject from personal experience. Explanations of the belief, which exists in connection with volition. Results of habits of belief. Strive to believe.

THERE is no exercise of the human mind, whether natural or spiritual, which has not its laws of origin and progress. This remark is applicable to Faith, as well as to every other inward principle.

2.—One of the most general laws of our mental nature, is the law of habit. We have already had occasion to refer to this law in a former chapter ; but have something further to say here. The law of HABIT, in its application to the principles of the mind, may be expressed by saying, that it is the facility and strength of action, resulting from frequent exercise or repetition. The perceptive powers, the memory, the power of reasoning, the affections, all invigorate themselves under the influence of this mighty law. The same can

be said of faith. Faith unexercised, becomes weak ; faith, in frequent exercise, becomes strong. He, who believes frequently, will believe energetically ; while he, who puts forth the act of belief only at distant intervals, will find the impotency of his faith corresponding to the infrequency of its exercise.

3.—And, in accordance with this general view, it is related of some pious persons, who have distinctly seen the connection between a strong faith, and the life of God in the soul, that they have endeavored to sustain and strengthen acts of faith, *by acts of the will*. Taught by an experience, which had already cost them much, that, in the language of an English poet,

——— “Our doubts are traitors,
“And make us lose the good we oft might win,
“By fearing to attempt,”

they have determined to meet and resist the treachery of unbelief by the religious patriotism, if we may so express it, of a fixed resolve. Their language has been, “*I will believe.*” “*I am determined not to doubt.*”

4.—In reading some account of the experience of a pious person, who is said to have died in the triumphs of faith, I find the following expressions: “I have given God my undivided heart ; believing that he does accept of it, and believing that the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin. Like a stone which the builder takes, and puts on the foundation, so do I lie on Christ’s blood and God’s promises ; giving God my soul and body a living sacrifice, and covenanting with

him never to doubt more. My language is, *I will believe. I will sooner die than doubt.*" And we may add, it is very proper, and it seems to us indispensable on the part of those, who wish to live the life of faith, that they should not only watch against unbelief, but that they should *resolve* against unbelief.

5.—This course is sometimes objected to. It is said, and in a general view of the subject is said very correctly, that belief ought to rest upon *evidence*, and not upon *volition*. The objection, however, is divested of validity, when it is understood, that the act of volition is not designed to have an influence independently of evidence, but in accordance with it, and in its support. Such have been the results of long-continued habits of doubting, that the faculty of belief, when exercised upon religious subjects, seems to have lost its appropriate power. It has become in a degree paralyzed, and its assent fails to be given, where it obviously ought to be. Under such circumstances it is obvious, that an act of the will may not only be proper, but that it is necessary. The mind, in consequence of having become in some degree disordered, stands in need of the aid, which a purpose or resolve of the will is calculated to give.

6.—A person, for instance, has been the subject of that inward experience, which may be supposed to constitute him a religious person ; and as such a person, he has given himself to God in an act of sincere and permanent consecration. He has an inward conviction, in accordance with what is really the case, if he be truly a devout and sincere man, that he has placed all upon

the divine altar. And he knows from the Scriptures, that God is pledged to receive all who are in this situation ; and that, in accordance with his promises, he will be, and that he is now, a friend and father to them ; and that all such persons are, and will be, so long as they continue in such a state of entire consecration, encircled and blessed in his paternal love. All this he knows to be true, because statements and promises of this kind, and to this effect, are abundantly announced in the Scriptures. But it is true, notwithstanding, that he finds a great difficulty in taking these promises home to himself. They are written, but they are not received ; they are applicable to his own case, but they are not applied. He has so long disbelieved, that the very faculty of believing, as already has been intimated, may be said to be struck with a palsy. It certainly seems incapable of moving and acting effectually, until it is encouraged and aided by some accessory influence. And a portion of this influence is a volition, or firm resolve, embodied in the declaration, "*I will believe,*" which I understand to be the same thing with saying, and nothing more than saying, "*I will no longer yield to doubts, which I have found to be unreasonable, and which I know to be destructive.* The evidence of God, to which Satan, taking advantage of my former evil habits, would blind me, shall have its effect. *I will receive it.*"

7.—The results of personal experience sustain the views which have been taken. Those persons, who have been inwardly convinced, that the promises of God

ought to control their belief, and those who have endeavored to secure this result by resolves or purposes calculated to diminish the effects of former habits of unbelief, have found themselves blessed in it. The susceptibility of belief, which had been weakened and almost prostrated in its action, has in this way become invigorated. And not only this, it is continually increasing its facility and strength of movement by each repeated exercise. The powerful law of habit lends its aid. So that the exercise of faith, which once seemed the most difficult thing, is now found to be easy.

8.—If these views are correct, it seems to be a proper and important direction, **STRIVE TO BELIEVE.** Make efforts to exercise faith. Resist, as much as possible, the dreadful influence of long-continued habits of unbelief; not in order that belief may be yielded to that which is not the truth; but that the truth, liberated from such unpropitious and erroneous influences, may have its appropriate and just effect.

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

RELATION OF FAITH TO THE PROMISES.

Faith attaches itself to various objects, and to objects considered in various respects. Of the varieties or modifications of belief, which may exist in respect to God himself. The faith of heathenism illustrated in the case of a North American Savage. References to Socrates and Numa. Of the faith of the Christian as compared with the faith of the heathen. Remarks on the promises. Quotation from Romaine, in illustration of faith in connection with the promises.

FAITH, in itself considered, is a very simple principle; but it possesses this peculiarity, a peculiarity which explains in part the great extent of its influence, that, on different occasions and under different circumstances, it may attach itself to any and every object; and consequently the sphere of its operations is very wide, perhaps we may say, as wide as the universe itself. And then there is this remark further to be made, that of all the various objects in this wide and unlimited sphere, it may make its selection, if we may so speak; that is to say, it may believe in many of them, or it may believe in a smaller number of them, or it may believe only in one of them; and it may also

believe in that one, considered in one of its aspects and relations only, or as considered in many.

2.—In religion, faith attaches itself to God as the primary object of belief. A belief in God, such a belief as issues in the soul's renovation and salvation, involves undoubtedly the fact of other objects and other exercises of belief. It involves a belief in the mission of Jesus Christ. It involves a belief in the mission and operations of the Holy Ghost. God, nevertheless, is the primary object ; the object to which all other belief tends, and in which it ultimately centres. But men may believe in God, in accordance with the remark just now made, considered in a part of his attributes and relations, or in the whole. They may believe in him, for instance, as the God merely of the natural creation ; or they may believe in him as the God of events, the God of providence as well as of nature ; or they may believe in him as the God of the Bible also.

3.—For my own part I find it difficult, not to yield a degree of respect to the humble and sincere faith even of a heathen ; limited, as it probably is in almost all cases, to God, considered as the God of nature only. I recollect to have read in the Life of David Brainerd an interesting account of a poor Indian, with whom he had become acquainted in the American wilderness, who seems to have had such a faith. The account, which this man gave of himself to Brainerd, who was then a missionary among the Indians residing near the Forks of the Delaware, was to this effect, and nearly in these words. He had formerly been like the rest of his

heathen brethren ; that is to say, he had been in the same unbelief and the same sins, until about four or five years before. At that time becoming very much distressed at what he had witnessed in himself and in others, he sought a retired and solitary place in the woods, and lived there entirely alone for a number of months. Having confidence neither in himself nor in his fellow-men, he could look no where in his sorrows but to that great Spirit, of whom he had a rude and imperfect conception as the God of nature, as a God shining in the stars and speaking in the winds. At length, he said, God comforted his heart, and showed him what he should do ; and since that time he had known God, and had tried to serve him ; and he now loved all men, of whatever nation or people they might be, as he had never done before. He built a small house, which Brainerd speaks of having visited ; and having adorned it with various images cut upon the several parts, he consecrated it to religious uses, and was in the habit of performing his devotional and religious acts in it. Brainerd says, that he was treated by this person with uncommon courtesy ; and that he seemed to be entirely hearty and sincere in his manifestations of kindness. He speaks of him as being a devout and zealous reformer ; and adds, that he was told by the Indians, that he opposed their drinking strong liquor with all his power ; and that, if at any time he could not dissuade them from it by all he could say, *he would leave them and go crying into the woods.* He represents him as being apparently sincere, honest,

and conscientious in his own way, and according to his own religious notions. He further remarks, that he was looked upon and derided among most of the Indians as a precise zealot, who made a needless noise about religious matters; "but I must say," he adds, "that there was something in his temper and disposition, which looked more like true religion than any thing I ever observed among other heathens."

4.—The faith of this poor Indian existed under the most unfavorable circumstances, but it gave him power; power over himself; power against threatening vices among his own people; power, in solitary places, with no companions but the wild woods and waters, to hold communion, after the imperfect manner of heathenism, with the Great Spirit, who is the Father both of the Christian and the Gentile. Of the origin of the faith of this Indian reformer, of its relation to the Atonement, of its ultimate effects upon his own character and happiness, we do not now undertake to speak. These are subjects, which require much discretion and piety rightly to solve them; and perhaps they are most wisely and safely left with him, who, as the common Father of all men, has the final destiny of all men in his hands. But we cannot help saying with great confidence, that it can be no discredit to a person, however advanced he may be in civilization and human culture, to regard such faith, whatever may be the amount of its supposed or its acknowledged imperfections, with a degree of sympathy and respect.

5.—Among nations, both ancient and modern, that with more or less of civilization have not been visited and blessed with the lights of Christianity, we discover other instances illustrative of the same general views. Persons have been found of high intellectual endowments and attainments, to whom human literature and honors could furnish no true solace of soul; especially in seasons of disappointment and adversity. They have felt, and felt deeply too, that nothing human could be a substitute for the divine; that faith in humanity, whatever value might attach to it, could never supply the place of faith in the Supreme Power. And those among them, who have had the courage and wisdom to look to that higher Power with what light they had, feeble though it might be, have never failed to find increased light and increased strength of purpose. I think it would be difficult to read the life and death of Socrates, illustrated as they are by the sublime commentary of his religious sentiments, without a strong conviction, that God does not desert those, who have faith in him, even according to the dim light of nature. Numa, the religious legislator and the priest of the people over whom he presided as King, was a wiser, a juster, and better man for his faith. Camillus, the distinguished leader and commander of the Romans, the preserver of the city and the state which Numa had endeavored to establish in religious sentiments, "*diligentissimus religionum cultor*," as he is described by the historians of his country, was a man of juster views and greater foresight, a man of greater energy and

endurance, for his religious belief, for his confidence in the presiding Power of the universe, perplexed and imperfect as it undoubtedly was.

We repeat, therefore, it is no discredit and no error, to say, that we ought to respect the faith even of a heathen, especially when it has God for its object. Perhaps we may go further and say, that such faith, whenever and wherever found, has something in it, something in its own intrinsic nature, which may be said, not merely to deserve, but to *command* respect.

6.—But if faith attaches value and honor to the character even of a heathen, to the Socrates of Athens, and to him, who, in his rude American hut, had the faith and the warning voice of Socrates without his knowledge and his moral and philosophical eloquence, then what limits shall we, or *can* we set to its value and to its renovating Power, when it rests upon the basis of God's word added to the basis of nature! If God gives great strength to those few and scattered ones, even among the heathen, who are enabled to believe strongly in himself, how much greater resources, and how much greater strength must those have, who have faith in God, not only as the God of nature and of providence, but as the God of the Bible; who reveals himself not dimly as in the light of heathenism, but clearly in the light of revealed truth; not merely in the terrible attribute of his justice, but in justice mingled with and chastened by mercy; with his wonderful announcement of the way of salvation through

the Atonement, and with all his gracious Promises applicable to every situation.

7.—As Christians, we believe in the Bible ; as believers in the Bible, we believe in the God of the Bible ; as believers in the God of the Bible, we not only believe in all it affirms of God's character, but in all it affirms of God's *promises*. God, in connection with the great Atonement accomplished in the person and sufferings of his Son, an event in his moral administration, which authorized him to speak mercifully as well as truly and wisely, has at last spoken to men in terms of consolation and support which he could not otherwise have employed ; and his word is unchangeable as its author. Here is a basis of faith, broad, ample, unalterable, meeting in its utmost extent all the multiplied exigencies of our nature. Hence the declaration of the Apostle Paul, who fully and freely acknowledged the conscience and the light of heathenism, such as it is, that the Jews had greatly the advantage over the heathen ; "*chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*" It is the God of the Bible, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of the promises, the God who has declared that he will be all and every thing to man on the mere condition of being believed in, that furnishes the strong ground of the Christian's belief, in distinction from, and above every other ground of belief. In condescension to our weakness, he goes into particulars ; he illustrates by his statements man's situation and trials, so that man can the better understand them himself ; and by a mul-

itude of specific declarations, beautiful in the expression as they are desirable and effective in their application, takes upon himself the responsibility of giving wisdom in every emergency, and of sustaining in the discharge of every duty.

8.—It is one of the great offices of faith to lay hold of the Promises; and to apply them promptly and effectively on the occasions, in which they were intended to apply. Many an hour of grief has been consoled; many a purpose of renovated life and action has been confirmed; many a temptation has been resisted and overthrown; many a struggling hope of possessing a sanctified heart has been established by faith acting on the promises. How strong are the arguments, (says Mr. Romaine in his interesting *Treatise on the Life of Faith*,) “to persuade the heirs of promise, to put their whole trust and confidence, in the faithfulness of their God! who, having provided an infinitely glorious and everlasting inheritance for them, was willing to make it over to them in the strongest manner of conveyance; and, therefore, he has given them the promise and the oath of God, which cannot possibly change or alter, that their faith might never doubt or waver, and their hope might at all times be sure and steadfast. And until he bring them to the inheritance itself, he has given them many sweet and blessed promises of all things needful for their temporal and spiritual estate, upon which he would have them not only to live comfortably at present, but also to receive them as part of the inheritance allowed them

for their maintenance, till they come to age, and enter upon the possession of the whole. And what God intended in his promise and oath, has its effects in a good degree among those who have the word of God abiding in them. They cast their anchor where he commands them, and they are not only safe, but also in time of the greatest troubles and temptations, have strong consolation. When enemies come, corruptions arise and difficulties are in the way; they have a promise, and a promise-keeping God to depend upon. Whatever straits they are in, the word abiding in them brings some promise of support and deliverance: the promise shows what God has engaged to do, and faith receives the fulfilling of his engagements. When they draw nigh to God in duties in ordinances, they know what he has promised to them that wait upon him, and they judge him faithful who hath promised; and lo, he is present with them. In short, while they live like themselves, as the heirs of promise, they are preserved from all evil, and want no manner of thing that is good. This is their happy case, thrice happy, because the means used to deprive them of their happiness, are overruled of God for the establishing it. The enemy rages against them, but in vain."

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH.

OF FAITH CONSIDERED IN SOME OF ITS RELATIONS TO REASONING.

Faith a principle which is entitled to maintain itself firmly in its position. Illustration of the subject. The stronger our faith, the less likely we are to be perplexed by the suggestions of human reasoning. Illustrations of this view. Faith and reason not necessarily and really, but only apparently in opposition. Faith may be regarded as a higher reason. Practical remarks.

FAITH implies the previous existence, in a greater or less degree, of perception and human reasoning. And such being the circumstances of its origin, it may properly be regarded as a principle or state of mind, entirely suitable to a reflecting and rational nature. But it ought to be remarked further, that, when faith, for its appropriate and adequate reasons, has attached itself to its appropriate objects, it does not allow itself to be driven from its position by any adverse suggestions, even when such suggestions are sustained by the imposing authority of thought and of deduction. This is particularly true of religious faith.

2.—We illustrate the subject thus. We believe in God. That is to say, we believe in the fact of his

existence. What we perceive, and what we feel, and what reason teaches us, leaves no doubt, that God is. To God, considered as an object of belief, faith attaches itself with the greatest firmness. Once having taken its position, it remains unchanged ; in other words, it is, and it continues to be a fixed and controlling principle of the mind, notwithstanding reason may suggest many doubts as to the mode of his existence and the manner of his operation.

3.—And in connection with this general view, I think we may lay down the principle, that the stronger our faith is, the less we are likely to be perplexed by such reasonings as have been indicated. We may suppose, in illustration of what has now been said, a case of this kind. A person, who has full faith in God, is afflicted by some great calamity. Reason is ready to inquire, why it is so, or suggest many doubts as to its justice. But strong faith, having its source in appropriate and adequate grounds of origin, and resting in the general idea of God's truth and justice and goodness, repels all such suggestions at once ; and maintains the soul in quietness and Christian strength.

4.—Abraham had faith in God ; that is to say, under the influence of the light which God had given him, light which had been addressed to him as a perceptive and rational being, he believed that God is, that all things are under his control, and that in all his dealings he is perfectly just. His mind, in the exercise of faith, rested fully and firmly in the general proposition of God's existence, superintending providence, and holi-

ness. Nevertheless, it is entirely reasonable to suppose, that, when he was called, in God's mysterious providence, to the fearful and afflicting office of sacrificing his own son, human reason, in distinction from that higher reason, which is embodied in a well established faith, took occasion to suggest a multitude of doubts and inquiries. But he remained unshaken. Faith, holding on to the general proposition of God's wisdom and goodness, at once rejected all suggestions, that were inconsistent with them.

5.—Many are the instances in the Bible, many are the instances in all periods and ages of the church, in which faith and reason have thus come in conflict. Job was a man of faith. He also, when his property and children were taken, and when he was exceedingly afflicted in his person as well as in other respects, had his inward trials undoubtedly; resulting from the inability of human reason, in its ordinary operations, to reconcile the apparent dealings of God with the goodness and justice of his character. But faith, in the severe inward conflict to which he was subjected, prevailed against reason; and he was enabled to say, "The Lord gave; and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

6.—It is not uncommon for Christians to eulogize faith in distinction from reason; and not unfrequently they speak of faith as a higher authority than reason. We are aware, that expressions of this kind, which are often on the lips of eminently pious and devoted people, suggest trials and doubts in the minds of some, *as if*

they implied an abandonment of reason. And it is not surprising that they should, when the expressions are taken in their literal and obvious import. But a little reflection on the subject will help to remove this difficulty. As Christians we do not, and we cannot abandon reason. The abandonment of reason would involve the abandonment of Christianity itself. We abandon reason, only when it is perversely applied ; and when we ought to abandon it. We abandon it in its support of particular facts and particular propositions ; and then only when such particular facts and propositions come in conflict with some more general facts and propositions, in which our faith is fully established. Abraham did not doubt, he could not doubt, that God is good and holy. His mind, in connection with the antecedent evidence, of which he had the experience both inwardly and outwardly, rested firmly by faith in this general proposition. He did not doubt in the least. Accordingly being established in this general truth by faith, he had nothing left but to reject at once all suggestions adverse to it, which human reason might bring in the shape of particular facts and particular propositions. In other words, believing in God as a God of all knowledge as well as of holiness, he thought it better to distrust human reason, which is limited, than to distrust God's reason, which is universal. He felt, that he himself in his blindness might be wrong ; but that God, in whom "is no darkness at all," could not be otherwise than right.

7.—These considerations obviously analyze and ad-

just the conflict, or rather the supposed conflict, between faith and reason. Faith and reason, when the matter is rightly understood, are by no means the opposites of each other. True faith and right reason always have harmonized, always will harmonize. The conflict, which from time to time takes place, is in appearance and not in reality; is relative and not absolute. It is true, that faith, resting upon reflection and reason, sometimes places itself in the attitude of opposition, and will not permit reason hastily and erroneously to undo its own work. And this is a state of things altogether true and right. It is entirely consistent and right, that religious faith, resting for adequate reasons, in general religious propositions of a high and controlling nature, should sustain this sublime position, a position which may be regarded as the result of a higher and more universal reason; and should reject at once and forever all the adverse suggestions of that other and subsequent reasoning, which moves in a lower sphere and with a narrower vision. It is a state of things, which may be regarded as represented in the simple statement, that faith, considering the grounds and circumstances of its origin, is God's reason against man's reason, is strong reason against weak reason, true and right reason against false reason.

8.—In connection with what has been said, we remark further, that the sooner we establish ourselves by a strong unwavering faith in those general religious truths, which, occupying a higher position, sweep over and control particular and subordinate cases, the better

it will be for us. Being thus established, the mind is at once placed in a position of hope and strength, and is relieved from a multitude of perplexities. When human reasonings have become consolidated in firm faith, the soul is not only relieved from assaults and perplexities from below, but seems to have power, such as it could not otherwise have, with that which is above. On such a soul the love of God, in particular, seems to be gently but richly shed abroad and infused from on high, instead of being laboriously wrought out and forced upward from beneath. No longer continually wearied with efforts originating in itself; but reposing in childlike quietness, of which faith is the true parent, it is purified and refreshed with the dews of divine grace unceasingly descending.

9.—“The ship’s navigation ceases,” says a certain writer, “when it enters the port. Thus the soul, after the fatigue of *MEDITATION*, [a word which he uses as synonymous with perceptive and reasoning acts,] finding itself in the calm of *CONTEMPLATION*, a state of mind resulting from the highest faith, ought to quit all its own reasonings, and remain peaceful and silent with its eye fixed simply and affectionately upon God.”* A state, which, in being closely united to God, is separated from all entangling alliances with that, which is not God; and which is followed by a sweet and peaceful rest, such as a condition of doubts and fears can never be acquainted with.

* Molinos, Introduction to the Spiritual Guide.

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

ON THE NECESSITY OF CONSECRATION IN CONNECTION WITH FAITH.

Faith implies previous consecration. Reference to an objection which is made to this view. Answer to this objection. The law of progress in religious experience. Practical application of the view presented. Further illustrations of the subject. The fact that additional light and grace depend upon our consecration, in accordance with what we now have, not inconsistent with the freeness or grace of God's gifts.

I THINK we may regard it as one of the established principles, having relation to the origin and the operations of faith, and which may properly be included under the denomination of the doctrines of faith, that our faith in God will be in proportion, or nearly in proportion, to our consecration to God. In other words, just in proportion as we give ourselves to God to do and to suffer his will without reserve, just in that proportion or degree we shall be likely to have confidence in him; a confidence, which will receive him not only in his more general character as God, but as the God of providence and the God of the promises. It is especially obvious, I think, and beyond all question,

that the highest results of faith, *Assurance of Faith* for instance, cannot be experienced, without a personal and specific consecration; a consecration which is entire and without reserve. The Savior himself may be regarded as fully implying all that has now been said in the instructive and interesting passage, where he says, addressing himself to the Jews, "How *can* ye believe, who receive honor one from another, and seek not that honor, *which cometh from God only?*" John 5 : 44.

2.—It will perhaps be objected here, that consecration to God necessarily implies the antecedent existence of faith in God to some extent; in other words that we cannot give ourselves to God in the act of consecration, without previously believing that God is. This difficulty seems to be fully met by the important fact, that we are obviously created with a belief, or perhaps we should rather say with tendencies to belief, in the God of nature; or in other words are created with such elements and tendencies of mind as necessarily result in the belief of God as the God of nature. There is much reason for thinking with bishop Butler, that natural religion and revealed religion are not in their nature different, but are parts of one and the same great system of truth; although it is true that revealed religion embraces things, which natural religion of itself could never have reached. And one of the most obvious and certain truths of natural religion is, that there is a God. He, who carefully notices the wonderful works of God either within him or without him, and who by his very mental constitution judges and cannot

help judging between right and wrong, and who feels either the pangs of remorse in doing evil or the joys of doing and sustaining the right, has an amount of knowledge and experience, which lays the foundation for the additional and deep conviction, that there is a God, that there *must* be a God.

3.—God, therefore, himself, in the exercise of that kindness which marks all his dealings with men, has given the preliminary, which the doctrine of faith demands. The divinity stands unveiled before the human mind ; revealed both within and without ; both in what it knows, and in what it feels. The Bible itself recognizes this view. It does not profess to reveal God, as a being absolutely unknown before. It takes for granted the existence of God, just as it takes for granted the existence of the human soul, and the fact of a conscience in man. And those, who say that they do not believe in God, be they Christian or heathen, if they will only analyze their own thoughts and heart, and will speak truly and candidly, can hardly fail to alter their mode of expression. They will be much more likely to say, that they believe in God's existence, and at the same time knowingly and deliberately reject him. They believe, and they reject. It would not be possible for men to reject God, a crime which is alleged against all natural men, without first believing that God is. The Apostle has expressed it precisely when he says, in connection with his general doctrine, that the heathen have a knowledge of God independently of Revelation, "*they knew God, but glorified him not*

as God." They had faith enough to bring them under condemnation; but not faith enough to renew their hearts in love.

4.—But if we are so constituted, that we naturally and necessarily know something of God, it is still true, that we may know him more. If it is a conceded fact, that we know him in a small degree, it is equally true that we may also know him much. If we may know him as the God of nature, we may also know him as the God of the Bible, as the God of providence, as the God of the New Covenant, as the God of the promises. We may know him as our own God and Father, as ours in prosperity and adversity, as ours in life and death, as ours to-day, to-morrow, and forever.

5.—But let us notice this in particular. The belief in God, which we have from nature, valuable as it undoubtedly is, has the effect merely to bring men under condemnation, *unless it is followed by something further*. And this is essentially true also of the incipient steps, the beginnings of a really gracious experience. On what principle, therefore, or in what way is it, that having but little light, whether it be the light of nature or the light of grace, we may reasonably expect to get more? I know of no principle and of no way or method, but that of spiritual correspondence with God according to what we now have; in other words, the way of humbly and unreservedly giving ourselves to God to be his, according to our present light; trusting in him for wisdom and strength, and for all that we need. Every thing, which has relation to our progress

in the divine life, seems to depend upon the position which we here take, viz. upon our conformity to this rule on the one hand, or our rejection of it on the other. If we do not give ourselves to God in correspondence with what he has imparted to us, but on the contrary, rejoice in the light which we have *as our own light*, which is the same thing as to rejoice in ourselves, and thus turn away from God, we can make no advancement. But if, entirely renouncing our own strength and wisdom, and giving ourselves wholly to God, we receive and rejoice in the light which we have *as God's light*, and in the deep feeling of our dependence look to God for more, we are in the way of increased light and of true salvation.

This, therefore, seems to be the law of inward progress, viz. WITH WHAT YOU HAVE, OBTAIN MORE. Be faithful to what is given, and the giver will add to his gifts. A law, enforced by the penalty already alluded to, viz. that the gifts of nature without the additions of grace, and the incipient gifts of grace without grace superadded, so far from essentially benefitting us, will only add to our condemnation. Or, as the Scriptures express it, "*whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.*"

6.—We will suppose, that the reader of these pages is a Christian. God has given you, in addition to the unavailing light of nature, (unavailing if it remain merely what it is,) the light of grace; so that you can say that you have some faith in God and some communion with him. It is an interesting inquiry, how

you shall increase it? The Savior has given the answer on various occasions and in various forms of expression; but all to the same import, viz. Improve what you have, and you shall have more. Just in proportion as ye seek not honor, one from another, but the honor which cometh from God only, ye shall have faith, and shall find that faith increasing. "If any man be a worshipper of God, *and doeth his will*, him he heareth," John, 9: 31. "*Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things,*" Mat. 25: 23. Be all to me according to the light, which I have condescended to give you; and I will be all to you in return.

7.—In other words, the human ability must correspond without reserve, and to its utmost extent, to the divine light, whether it be more or less. Knowledge to the extent, in which we are able to conform to what we know, furnishes the basis of obligation. It is a principle of moral philosophy, which is well understood and is considered as very obvious, that our obligations can never be less than our ability and our knowledge. "He, who knoweth his master's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." In other words, the person, who does not correspond to God in accordance with the obligation which God imposes, will not be likely to have the disposition, and certainly will not have the right, to plead the divine promises, and is clearly the subject of God's marked disapprobation. But to correspond, in the utmost extent of our ability, to all that we actually know and to all that we are now

able to know of our duty, is essentially the same thing, perhaps we may say, is precisely the same thing, as to consecrate ourselves entirely to God.—Consecration therefore, as it seems to us, consecration without reserve either as to time or object, is the indispensable condition of inward religious advancement.

8.—Whether, therefore, you have much religion, or little religion, or none at all, follow the divine light; whether it be the light of nature, which only shows us our state of condemnation; or the light of restoring and redeeming grace, which leads us to the Cross, that we may be pardoned there; or the light of that grace, which sanctifies the heart, by exploring its secret recesses and by bringing all into subjection; be it each or all, be it more or less, correspond with all your powers to all that is given, and God will give more. This, if we rightly understand it, is the law of increase in spiritual things, the law of light added to light, of grace, added to grace, of glory brightening in the front of glory.

9.—We find here an answer to the question, often proposed with intense interest, why is it that there are so few cases of assured faith and hope? why is it that there are so few persons, who, under the influences of sanctifying grace, have reached the state of assured or perfected love, and of constant communion with God? The answer is, it is because by not corresponding to the light and grace which they had, they lost that, which they might have had. They would not take the cup of consecration, which they knew to be bitter to the

natural taste, and therefore they did not, and could not receive the inward healing, which, in connection with God's plan of operation, it might have imparted. It is impossible in the nature of things, that a person can have strong faith in God as a father and friend, or that he can love him with unmixed love, when he is conscious that by not consecrating himself he is violating a religious duty. Belief will always sink, and consequently love, which has its foundation in belief, will always sink in proportion to the weakness or defect of the consecrating act.

10.—But it will be inquired perhaps with some solicitude, whether this doctrine, which denies advancement in religion without consecration, and which thus implies an act of the creature, *does not exclude grace*? In replying to this question, we feel obliged to say, that we cannot perceive any reasonable grounds of distrust and anxiety here. It is certainly difficult to see, how an act of correspondence on the part of the creature to God's intentions and acts of mercy, is inconsistent with what we variously denominate grace, freeness, or gratuity on God's part. Man, considered as a moral and responsible being, could not do less than what is implied in such correspondence, without rejecting God. There is, and can be no alternative. He must either correspond with God by a reception of what God proposes to give and by a full and harmonious cooperation, or he must reject. And it is virtually impossible, as it seems to us, for God, while the creature rejects what he offers, to give more, or to continue for any length of time that

which he has already given. But the act of correspondence, which is thus rendered indispensable on man's part, if he would experience the continuance and the increase of the divine favor, being obviously nothing more than an act accepting what God offers, or perhaps more definitely and truly an act of consent to enter into harmony with the divine operation, it does not, and cannot detract from the free and gratuitous nature of the divine gifts. It is self-evident, that the mere reception of a gift, by an intelligent approval and co-operation on the part of the recipient, can never alter its nature as a gift.

11.—What a motive is presented by the views of this chapter, to a full correspondence with God; in other words, to a consecration, immediate, unreserved, and perpetual. An act so obviously necessary, and yet which so few are ready and willing to perform; the omission of which so fully accounts for the prevalence of inward darkness and the want of inward growth. Give yourself to God in all things, if you would have God give himself to you. True, the act of consecration, in its relation to the world, and the things of the world, may be like the cutting off of the right hand or the plucking out of the right eye; it may be attended, as it undoubtedly will be, with the painful sundering of earthly ties, but it is the only condition, so far as we can perceive, on which we are able to advance from the lower to the higher degrees of faith and love, and ultimately to possess the fullness of God, as our present and everlasting portion.

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH.

ASSURANCE OF FAITH.

Different degrees of faith. Evidence of the state of assurance of faith from the Scriptures. Evidence from other sources. Of appropriating faith in its relation to assurance of faith. Particular instances in illustration of this form of experience. No assurance of faith without antecedent consecration. Additional remarks.

WE have already had occasion, in a former chapter, to make the remark, that there are different degrees of faith. In some cases faith is feeble, so much so as scarcely to be a distinct subject of notice in our consciousness. In other cases, existing with increased strength in greater or less degrees, it developes itself as a distinctly marked and operative principle. And there are yet other cases, less frequent, it is true, than would be desirable, in which it exists in that high degree, which is denominated ASSURANCE. A state of Christian experience, which implies the highest degree of Christian devotedness, and brings the soul into the most intimate communion with God.

2.—The existence of the state of Assurance is generally admitted. There are many passages of Scripture,

which imply its existence ; and many statements, which cannot well be explained on any other grounds. "It is manifest," says President Edwards in his *Work on the religious affections*, "that it was a common thing for the saints that we have a history or particular account of in the Scripture, to be *assured*. God, in the plainest and most positive manner, revealed and testified his special favor to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Daniel, and others. Job often speaks of his sincerity and uprightness with the greatest imaginable confidence and assurance, often calling God to witness to it ; and says plainly, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall see him for myself, and not another,' Job, 19 : 25. David, throughout the book of Psalms, almost every where speaks without any hesitancy, and in the most positive manner, of God as *his* God ; glorying in him as his portion and heritage, as his rock and confidence."—"The Apostle Paul, through all his Epistles, speaks in an assured strain ; ever speaking positively of his special relation to Christ, his Lord, and Master, and Redeemer ; and his interest in, and expectation of the future reward."

3.—Many of the formularies of belief or creeds of different religious sects, which may properly be regarded as expressing the deliberate and cherished sentiments of those who have adopted them, recognize the existence of the state of assurance. The Confession of Faith, adopted by the American Congregational Churches in 1680, has the following expressions in a short chapter especially devoted to this subject. "Such as believe in

the Lord Jesus and love him in sincerity, endeavoring to walk in all good conscience before him, may in this life *be certainly assured that they are in a state of grace*; and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed." And in accordance with this view, Dr. Hopkins, the learned author of a system of theology and a member of the religious denomination whose belief on this subject has been given in the passage just quoted, says, "If a person, who has lived a life eminently devoted to God, and in the constant practice of all the duties of Christianity, shining externally in good works, and all the graces of our holy religion, should, on proper occasions, humbly and modestly declare to his christian friends, *that he was raised above all doubts about his state, and had, for a long time, enjoyed full assurance of his salvation, no one would have reason to call it in question.*"* And he adds very correctly, that it is the duty of Christians "constantly to have and maintain this assurance." And it may be proper to add here, that the doctrine of Assurance, generally expressed by the phrase Assurance of Faith, was formerly more familiar to the public mind in this country, as it seems to me, than it is at present. In the early periods of our country's history, the subject of religion took the precedence of every other subject, and men were expected, under the thorough discipline of the Word and of Providence, not merely to believe faintly and doubtfully, but to believe

* Hopkins' System of Doctrines, Pt. 2d. Ch. 4.

with that higher degree of religious trust, which is expressed by assurance. A writer in the recently published work, entitled the Great Awakening, in giving an account of a meeting of Ministers in Boston, more than a hundred years ago, at which he himself was present, says, "Our conversation was upon Assurance; the grounds of it, the manner of obtaining it, and the special operation of the Holy Spirit therein. A very useful conversation."

4.—The experience of assurance of faith involves the experience of appropriating faith. Appropriation may exist without assurance; but, such is the relation of ideas and doctrines in the two cases, that assurance cannot exist without appropriation. The person who exercises Appropriating faith, believes in Christ, not only as the sacrifice for men generally, and believes in the promises of God not merely as promises available to men generally, but unites the object of faith with the subject of faith; and believes in Christ as a Savior applicable and *savingly available in his own case*, and in the promises, as belonging *to himself*. Assurance of faith, without being the same thing as appropriation of faith, includes all this; but it includes also or rather it implies something more. In other words, assurance of faith differs from appropriation of faith, which may be more or less decided and strong according to the circumstances of the case, chiefly in the particular of carrying the act of belief or faith to the *highest degree*. He, who is in the state of assurance of faith, does not believe in his acceptance with God feebly and in-

efficiently. The faith, which he exercises, is a strong faith ; so much so, as the term assurance itself obviously indicates, as altogether to exclude the feeling of uncertainty.

5.—We think it cannot well be doubted, that there have been individuals, both anciently and in modern times, who have been the subjects of this high religious state. And we see no reason, why, instead of being so unfrequent as it is, it should not be the common experience, the common state of Christians. There are some persons, it is true, of minds of so little capacity, that they seem almost incapable of fully understanding the grounds of a perfected Christian life. Others appear to combine, with an adequate understanding, a want of decision, a weakness of purpose, which vitiates and annuls what their reason approves and instigates. And others, again, in consequence of a disordered state of the nervous system, or for some other cause, may be described as constitutionally subject to a sort of conceptive and apparitional experience, or what is hardly more favorable, are under the influence of strong and variable emotional impulses, which throw them off from the true track. But with some exceptions of this kind, in which charity, prompted by the acknowledged existence of unusual human infirmity, is disposed, without making any unwarrantable allowances, to diminish, nevertheless, its favorable anticipations, every Christian is very reasonably and justly expected, not only to have faith, but to become *assured* in faith ; to be not only the servant, but the child of God ; and to walk with God, and to

live with God in the most intimate, affectionate, and sacred communion.

6.—It is a matter of gratitude, that some persons have recognized the responsibility, which rests upon them; and have been enabled, under the divine influence and blessing, to become what they felt that they ought to be. It would not be difficult to enumerate individuals, in all the various denominations of Christians, who have lived for a considerable length of time, in entire union with God, and in full assurance. A few years since an elder of a Presbyterian church in Ohio died at a very advanced age. He informed his Pastor on his dying bed, that his attention to religious things had been awakened, and that he had become a subject of religious experience and hope under the ministry of Whitefield, at the age of fifteen. His long life had been distinguished for its blameless innocence, its strong faith, its meek and humble devotedness to God. And he was enabled, with thankfulness to the divine grace which he had experienced, to assure his Pastor, in the course of this conversation, that, during the seventy years which had intervened since his conversion, "*he had never had a dark hour.*" A certain person once wrote to Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers, a woman of intelligence and of remarkable piety, for the purpose of ascertaining from her explicitly and decisively, whether she could speak with confidence of being in that state of assured or perfected faith and love, which she had long aimed to realize. She answered, not, so far as we can perceive, in the spirit of unreflecting and hasty

presumption, but because she could not do otherwise under the facts of her inward experience, in the following words : “Blessed be God, *I have not the shadow of a doubt*. Even Satan himself finds these suggestions vain, and has left them off. He would rather lead me to doubt, or care for *to-morrow* ; saying such and such a thing is at hand, and will overcome thee. Thou wilt fall in some of thy trials ; or, when death comes, thou wilt be under a cloud. But through divine grace I am enabled to discern whence these suggestions come, and they never distress me for a moment ; for, *by constantly looking to Jesus, I receive fresh strength in every time of need*.” * I suppose that the learned and pious Hermann Francke, whose name is permanently associated with the erection of the celebrated Orphan House at Hallé in Germany, must have known something of this state, when near the close of a long life devoted with almost unexampled fidelity to holy objects, he exclaimed, “I praise thee, dear Savior, that thou hast purified me from sin, and made me a king and a priest unto God.”

7.—Such instances, though less numerous than they should be, are still to be found, from time to time, in the history of the church. But it seems to be hardly necessary to enumerate them, when we find in the Scriptures, as we have already had occasion to notice, such clear announcements of the doctrine under consid-

* Experience and Spiritual Letters of Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers, Letter VIII.

eration, and such striking illustrations of it. The Apostle Paul, for instance, could have had no doubt, either as to his love of God or his acceptance with God, when he exclaimed, "*I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at the last day.*"

8.—Assuming, in connection with what has been said, the great desirableness of this state, and the obligation resting upon every Christian to aim at the possession of it, we proceed to make a few additional remarks. And one remark is this. Whatever may be true in regard to the lower degrees of religious faith, we may regard it as a fixed principle, that there can be no such thing as assurance of faith, *without the antecedent existence of personal and entire consecration.* Assurance of faith, as the phrase appears to be understood by those, who have written upon the subject, is not merely an assured faith, that God has an existence, or that he is good and just; but it is an assurance or assured belief that God is the God, the Father, and Friend of the subject of this faith. In other words, it is a state of mind, existing on the part of the subject of it, which excludes doubt in relation to his own personal and religious acceptance. The Christian, who possesses it, is enabled to speak in the first person. With a calm, unwavering, rejoicing confidence, and still without presumption, he can say of Christ, that he is MY

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Savior ; and can say of God, that he is **MY** God, **MY** Father, **MY** Friend.

Now we do not hesitate to say, that this can never be done by a person, who has not seriously and fully consecrated himself to God. Not to consecrate ourselves to God, with a fixed purpose to do his will, is the same thing, as it seems to us, or at least is essentially the same thing, as deliberately to sin against God. Certain it is, that he, who is not willing to consecrate himself to God with a full purpose to conform to his designs, is willing to sin against him, when a favorable opportunity presents. It is not too much to say, that he is conscious, and must be conscious, at the present moment, of sinning against God *in his heart*. It is obviously impossible, that a person in this state of mind, if he has any proper conceptions of God's law and of God's character, should have a full assurance of being the subject of his acceptance and favor. No person, therefore, whatever other degrees of faith he may have, can enjoy full assurance of faith, who is not conscious, that he has in all things, and for all time to come, and with all the powers of perception and volition which he possesses, consecrated himself to God without reserve.

9.—A belief of our acceptance with God, founded on the fact of our entire consecration to him, *taken in connection with the declarations and promises of God's Word*, is such a belief, as "no one," in the language of Dr. Hopkins, "would have reason to call in question." The evidence in the case is not what might be

called by a term, which numerous facts in ecclesiastical history render almost an indispensable one, "*apparitional*" evidence; that is to say, the evidence of outward appearances and manifestations, the evidence of sights and sounds, of dreams and visions, upon which so many rely; but upon which the Bible no where authorizes us to place reliance. Nor is it what may be called "emotional evidence," the evidence of mere joy and sorrow, upon which so many others rely; but which we obviously cannot rely upon with entire confidence, because our joys and sorrows are very variable, and may arise from causes, which are not religious, although they are frequently mistaken for such. It is the evidence, the divine and infallible evidence, of God's Spirit testifying through the principle of faith; and that faith, which exists distinctly and quietly in our consciousness, just as any other analogous state of mind does, resting upon *God's immutable Word*. If we have given ourselves to God to be wholly and forever his, then we have no reason for doubting, (and the testimony of the Holy Spirit revealed in the act of faith is in accordance with the fact,) that we are the children of God, since we have God's immutable word, that we are such. "*Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*" 2d Cor. 6 : 17, 18.

10.—Another remark, which we have to make, is this. Those, who are in assurance of faith, or who are

aiming at and approximating that state, should *guard against the influence of former habits of unbelief*. The fact, that they have given themselves wholly to God, and that he has promised to accept them, and that he does now accept them, while it furnishes ample basis of the assured belief of their acceptance with God, is not inconsistent with strong temptations to unbelief. Against the influence of these temptations they would do well carefully to guard. They should resist them, not only by prayers to God, but by fixed resolutions, by strong purposes; remembering that the doubts, which are thus suggested, and which they are thus called upon to resist, do not spring from real evidence adverse to their acceptance with God, but chiefly from the influence of a species of infirmity and vacillation of mind resulting from former habits of unbelief.

11.—The state of assurance, exalted as it obviously is, is not an unchangeable state. Persons, who are in this state, are not only subject to strong temptations, but they sometimes fall into sin. And Satan will be likely to suggest to them under such circumstances, not only that the transgression of those, who have been so highly favored, is peculiarly aggravated, as it certainly is; but particularly that *there no longer remains any hope for them, or but very little hope, in the divine mercy*. We remark again, therefore, that no place should be given to such an unworthy suggestion as this. There is the same fountain of redemption opened for souls in the most advanced state of grace, when they fall into sin, as for the errors and sins of those, who

have made the least progress. If, therefore, in any moment of imperfect inward recollection, or of sudden temptation, the soul is removed from its Centre, and is led into any form of transgression, it should at once look to God with confidence, however deeply unworthy it may be ; and repenting in the very moment of the perception of its wrong-doing, should believe, and be forgiven.

12.—Persons, who are in the state of assurance of faith, possess, as a natural result of their assurance, all other Christian graces in a high degree ; perhaps we may say, in the highest degree, especially love. Faith, if it exists in the degree in which it ought to exist, is the root, the fountain, from which all other Christian graces will certainly flow, both on their appropriate occasions and in their appropriate strength.

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF RECEIVING BY FAITH.*

Answers to prayer may reasonably be expected. Nature of the answers which may be expected to be given. Answers to prayer to be received by faith. Illustrations of this doctrine. Additional remarks indicating the results and applications of the principles, which are laid down.

It is well understood that we must pray in faith. No petition to God, which is not attended with confidence in his character and his word, can be acceptable to him. But I suppose that it is not so generally understood and recognized that, in most cases, we must *receive* by faith, as well as pray by faith; that faith is as necessary in the reception of the thing petitioned for, as in the petition itself.

1.—In order the better to understand this subject, we would remark, in the first place, that every Christian, who humbly and sincerely addresses his Maker,

* This chapter is found in the Interior Life. It is introduced here, as necessary to a full understanding of the subject of the present Work.

may reasonably expect an answer. It does not well appear how a perfectly just and holy Being could impose on his creatures the duty of prayer, without recognizing the obligation of returning an answer of some kind. In making this remark, we imply, of course, that the prayer is a *sincere* one. An insincere prayer, just so far as insincerity exists, is not entitled to be regarded as prayer, in any proper sense of the term. Our first position, therefore, is, that every person, who utters a sincere prayer, may reasonably expect an answer, and that in fact an answer always is given, although it is not always understood and received. And this appears to be entirely in accordance with the Scriptures. "Ask, and it SHALL be given unto you; seek and ye SHALL find; knock and it SHALL be opened unto you. For every one that asketh RECEIVETH; and he that seeketh FINDETH; and to him, that knocketh, it shall be OPENED."

2.—But it becomes now an important inquiry, What is the true and just answer of God to the petitions of his people? It seems to us that it is, and it cannot be any thing else, than the decision of his own infinitely just and omniscient mind, that he will give to the suppliant or withhold, just as he sees best. In other words, the true answer to prayer is God's deliberate purpose or will, existing in connection with the petition and all the circumstances of the petition. But some will say, perhaps, that on this system we sometimes get our answer, without getting what we ask for; and that God's decision may not correspond with our own desire.

But this objection is met by a moment's consideration of the nature of prayer. There never was true prayer, there never can be true prayer, which does not recognize, either expressly or by implication, an entire submission to the divine will. The very idea of prayer implies a right on the part of the person to whom the prayer is addressed, either to give or to withhold the petition. And the existence of such a right on the part of God implies a correlative obligation on the other party to submit cheerfully to his decisions. To ask absolutely, without submission to God's will, is not to pray, but to *demand*. A demand is as different from true prayer, as a humble request is from an imperative order. A request God always regards; he always treats it with kindness and justice; but a demand cannot be properly addressed to Him, nor can it properly be received by Him. The true model of the spirit of supplication, even in our greatest necessities, is to be found in the Savior's prayer at the time of his agony in the garden. "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. *Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.*" True prayer, therefore, that prayer, which can be suitably addressed to the Supreme Being, and that which it is suitable for an imperfect and limited mind to offer, always involves the condition, whether it be expressed or not, that the petition is agreeable to the divine will. This condition is absolutely essential to the nature of the prayer. There is no acceptable prayer, there is no true prayer

without it. Such being the nature of the prayer, the answer to the prayer will correspond to it, viz. it will always be the decision of the divine mind, whatever that decision may be, made up in view of the petition, and of all the attendant circumstances.

3.—The next inquiry is, How are we to receive the answer? By sight or by FAITH? It seems to us that it must be by faith. The life of the just is represented as a life of faith; and we should naturally conclude the life of faith would include the answer to prayer, as well as prayer itself.

It is very evident that the just live, as subjects of the divine Sovereign, not only by praying but by being answered. And in either case, according to the Scripture representation, the principle or inspiring element of the inward life, whether a person prays or is answered in prayer, is faith. Any other view will probably be found, on close examination, to be inconsistent with the doctrine of living by faith. Accordingly, on the true doctrine of holy living, viz. by faith, we go to God in the exercise of faith, believing that he will hear; and we return from him in the exercise of the same faith, believing that he *has* heard; and that the answer exists and is registered in the divine mind, although we do not know what it is, and perhaps shall never be permitted to know.

And in accordance with these views, if, in a given case, we know from the word of God that the petition is agreeable to the divine will, and that it is also agreeable to the divine will that it should be granted *now*,

then the doctrine of faith will require us to believe, that the divine decision is made up and is given, and that we do *now* have the things which we sought for, although they may come in a different way, and with a different appearance from what we anticipated. And, on the other hand, if the word of God has not revealed to us the divine will, the doctrine of faith still requires us to believe that the true answer exists in the will of God ; that the decision of God is made up as in the other case, whatever that decision may be, and whenever and wherever it may be visibly accomplished. In both cases we have need of faith ; we believe that God is either *now* doing, or that he *will* do. So that the true answer to prayer, as it seems to us, is an answer resting upon the revealed declaration or word of God for its basis, and made available to us in any given case by an act of faith. God promises that he will answer. Faith, accepting the declaration, recognizes the answer, whether it be known or unknown, as actually given in every case, where it can justly be expected to be given.

4.—We proceed now to give some illustrations. We will suppose, for instance, that, in a particular emergency, we need and are sincerely desirous of wisdom to guide us, and that we truly and humbly ask for it. While we thus pray, it is of course implied, that we, at the same time, employ all those rational powers which God has given us, and which are appropriate to the subject under consideration. To do otherwise would be like the husbandman's asking the rains and the blessing of heaven upon lands, which he had neglected to culti-

vate. While we thus pray and thus act, it becomes our privilege and our duty, in accordance with the doctrines of the *life of faith*, to believe fully and firmly, that God does in fact answer, and that in the sanctified exercise of the powers which are given us, we truly have that degree of wisdom which is best for us in the present case. Whether we are conscious of any new light on the subject or not, it is our privilege, and what is very important, it is our *duty*, as those who would be wholly the Lord's, to believe that we have just that degree of knowledge which is best for us. Even if we are left in almost entire ignorance on the topic of our inquiry, and are obliged to grope our way onward in the best manner we can, we still have the high satisfaction of knowing, that we are placed in this position because God sees that a less degree of light is better in our case than a greater, and it is certain that his perception of it involves the fact that it is so. And accordingly, if it be true that God does not give to us that precise form and degree of wisdom, which, in our ignorance we sought for, we nevertheless have received all that wisdom, which, in the view of faith, is either necessary or desirable. Such is God's answer. And such also is the *true* answer, viz., the answer which precisely corresponds to the spirit of the petition, if the petition has been offered up in the true spirit. But it is obvious it is an answer, which could never be realized as the true answer, and as God's answer, except in the exercise of faith. It is, therefore, an answer resting upon the revealed declaration or word of God,

viz., that he will give wisdom to those that sincerely ask it, and made available to us in being received by faith. It answers our purpose just as much and as well, and in some important points of view far better, than if it were an answer addressed directly to our sight.

5.—We will suppose, as another illustration of the subject, that we have a sincere and earnest desire for the salvation of one of our friends. Under the pressure of this desire we lay the case before our heavenly Father in supplication. What is the nature of the answer which we can reasonably expect, and which we ought to expect under such circumstances? Is it a specific answer of such a nature as to make known to us, by a direct communication, whether the thing shall be done or not, and whether it shall be done at a particular time or not? Or is it an answer resting upon the revealed declaration of the word of God, as that answer is received and made available to us by faith? In the former case we shall pray till we know, or rather till we think we know; not merely know that God answers us, and answers us in the best manner; but what is a very different thing, shall pray till we know or think we know what the answer is. Under the influence of a very subtle and secret distrust of God, we shall not be disposed to desist until we obtain some sign, some voice, some specific manifestation, some feeling which shall make us *certain*; and certain, not merely that God hears us, and will do all he consistently can for us; but shall insist on a certain knowledge, by means of such

signs and manifestations, of the precise thing which he will do. In other words, we cannot trust the answer in God's keeping; but must gratify our inordinate and sinful curiosity by having a revelation of it.—In the latter case, viz., where we expect an answer, resting upon God's word and received by faith, it is very different. While we humbly, earnestly, and perseveringly lay our request before God, we shall leave the result in his hands with entire resignation; believing in accordance with the declarations of his holy word, that he does truly hear us; entirely confident that he will do what is right; and recognizing his blessed will, although that will may as yet be unknown to us, as the true and only desirable fulfilment of our supplication. We shall feel, although salvation is desirable both for ourselves and others, that the fulfilment of the holy will of God is still more, yea infinitely more desirable. "THY WILL BE DONE." And here is a real answer, such an answer as would completely satisfy an angel's mind; and yet it is an answer received by simple faith. "*The just shall live by faith.*" The whole doctrine is beautifully summed up in a short passage in the first Epistle of John. "And this is the confidence [or strong faith] that we have in him, that if we ask any thing *according to his will*, he heareth us. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, *we know that we have the petitions that we desire of him.*"

6.—In connection with the doctrine which has been laid down, viz., that answers to prayers are to be received by faith, we proceed to make a few remarks

which are naturally related to it. And one is, that this doctrine is favorable to self-renunciation. The desire of definite and specific answers naturally reacts upon the inward nature and tends to keep alive the selfish or egotistical principle. On the contrary, the disposition to know only what God would have us know, and to leave the dearest objects of our hearts in the sublime keeping of the general and unspecific belief that God is now answering our prayers in his own time and way, and in the best manner, involves a present process of inward crucifixion, which is obviously unfavorable to the growth and even existence of the life of self.

7.—We remark again, that a disposition to seek a specific, or rather a visible answer to our prayers, in distinction from an answer addressed to our faith, tends to weaken the principle of faith. The *visible* system, if we may be permitted so to call it, implies that we will trust God only so far as we can see him. It requires, as one may say, ready payment, cash in hand, a mortgage of real estate, something seen or tangible. It cannot live upon what it calls mere air; it is not disposed to trust any thing to a mere word, a mere promise, though it be the word or promise of the Almighty. Such, on a close examination, will be found to be the spirit of the specific or visible system; a system which will answer, to some extent, in our intercourse with men, but not in our intercourse with God. It is easy to see, in addition to other evils resulting from it, that it is adverse to the growth of faith; which,

in accordance with a well known law of our mental and religious nature, flourishes by exercise, and withers by repression. If the system, which is not satisfied without seeing or knowing, should prevail generally, faith would necessarily be banished from the world, and God would be banished with it.

8.—The system, which requires a present and visible or ascertained answer, in distinction from the system of faith, which believes that it has an answer, but does not require God to make it known, till he sees best to make it known, is full of danger. It tends to self-confidence, because it implies that we can command God, and make him unlock the secrets of his hidden counsels whenever we please. It tends to self-delusion, because we are always liable to mistake the workings of our own imaginations or our own feelings, or the intimations of Satan, for the true voice of God. It tends to cause jealousies and divisions in the church of Christ, because he, who supposes that he has a specific or known answer, which is the same, so far as it goes, as a specific revelation, is naturally bound and led by such supposition, and thus is oftentimes led to strike out a course for himself, which is at variance with the feelings and judgments of his brethren. Incalculable are the evils, which, in every age of the Christian history, have resulted from this source.

9.—We have but a single remark more, viz., it is a great and blessed privilege to leave every thing in the hands of God ; to go forth like the patriarch Abraham, not knowing whither we go, but only knowing that God

leads us. "BE CAREFUL FOR NOTHING ; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." Philip. 4 : 6. This is what is sometimes denominated 'walking in a " general and indistinct faith ;" or walking in the " obscurity of faith," or in the " night of faith." Faith, in its relation to the subject of it, is truly a light in the soul, but it is a light which shines only upon *duties*, and not upon results or events. It tells us what is now to be done, but it does not tell us what is to follow. And accordingly it guides us but a single step at a time. And when we take that step, under the guidance of faith, we advance directly into a land of surrounding shadows and darkness. Like the patriarch Abraham, we go, not knowing whither we go, but only that God is with us. In man's darkness, we nevertheless walk and live in God's light. A way of living, which may well be styled blessed and glorious, however mysterious it may be to human vision. Indeed, it is the only life worth possessing, the only true life. " Let the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing ;" let nations rise and fall ; let the disturbed and tottering earth stand or perish ; let God reveal to us the secret designs of his providence or not, it is all well. " Cast all your cares upon God, for he careth for you." " BELIEVE in the Lord, your God, so shall ye be established. BELIEVE his prophets, so shall ye prosper."

PART SECOND.

THE POWER OR EFFECTS OF FAITH
IN THE
REGULATION OF MAN'S INWARD NATURE.

CHAPTER FIRST.

ON THE RELATION OF FAITH TO THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD

Of the tendency in the human mind to seek manifestations. Of the development of this tendency in heathenism. Further illustrations of it. Impossible for God to manifest himself to the full extent of his existence and nature. Hence all beings, angels as well as men, must live by faith. Additional remarks.

UNBELIEF attaches itself to that, which is seen. Faith attaches itself to that, which is not seen. Accordingly those, who do not live by faith, must live by sight; that is to say, must live, not merely by what God is, but by what he *manifests* himself to be; not merely by the *reality* of God, which is one thing, but by the manifestation of God, *so far as he can be comprehended by our limited faculties*, which is another and a very different thing. And hence it is, that just in proportion as our faith is strong, we rest upon the reality of God, though clouds and darkness may be upon it. And just in proportion as our faith is weak, we desire a manifestation; something which we can see, something which we can touch.

2.—And as unbelief is the great characteristic of men in their original state, it may always be said with great truth, that it is natural to the human mind in that state to seek for manifestations. And this tendency, if we have formed a right estimate of it, always remains there, and continues to exert an influence, just in proportion as the mind itself remains unsanctified, either in whole or in part. It is true that man, even in his unrenewed state, often professes to regret his alienation from God, and to desire the restoration of union with him; but he first wishes to *know what God is*. And we are willing to acknowledge, that this is right, and is what it should be. But the difficulty is, that he seems in his unbelief, (and the same is true of the Christian just so far as unbelief remains,) to have but little reliance on any knowledge of God, *which is not visible and tangible*. In other words, as we have already intimated, he must have a MANIFESTATION.

3.—It is this tendency, which explains, in part at least, some of the facts of Heathenism. In all heathen nations we find the ideas, which they entertain of their divinities, embodied in various images; which, encircled and sanctified as they are by the traditions of many generations, become to them a divine or “deific” manifestation. Behold, “these be the gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.” Their gods are before them, their Baals and Ashtaroths, their Brahmas and Vishnoos; not conceptively or as an object of the imagination, but *visibly*; not revealed to faith, but to sight; and they fall down and worship.

4.—In souls, not truly and wholly consecrated to God, in other words, in souls in which faith has not become the controlling and absorbing principle, there are very likely to be some remains of this natural and unspiritual tendency. The facts of ecclesiastical history, both ancient and modern, abundantly show this to be the case. It is not enough, that God wrought miracles and sent prophets in times past, that he appeared in the clouds of Sinai, and in the burning bush of the wilderness. These things, to minds in which faith has not had its perfect work, are mere reminiscences of the past; they have become historical; they are revealed to faith, and not to sight. And hence they are looking in various directions, seeking a sign, some burning bush, some chariot of fire, some shaking of the stones of the temple and some rending of its mysterious veil, some opening in the heavens where God shall be seen visibly in a human form on a great white throne; each one, influenced by his own associations, and delineating in his own imagination the mode of his manifestation, and the time and manner of his coming.

5.—It cannot be doubted, that this subject is one of considerable practical importance. And one remark, which we have to make in relation to it, is this. There may, undoubtedly, in the proper sense of the terms, be what may be called a manifestation of God; that is to say, a manifestation, which has relation to God; a manifestation, which indicates the fact of his existence and some of the attributes of his character. But God

himself, including *the mode* of his existence, as well as the fact of his existence, God, *in the fullness and extent of his being*, never can be manifested. This, we think, however repugnant it may be to our first thoughts, is self-evident. It is entirely obvious, as it seems to us, that the finite never can comprehend the Infinite; and perhaps we may go further and say, that it never can make any real, any assignable approximation to it. Let it be supposed, that God manifests himself to the full extent of the capacity, which the creature possesses to receive the manifestation, it is still a manifestation only so far as the creature is able to receive it. It is only a SIGN of God, a *mark*, an indication; but not really and truly *the thing signified*. There are still heights and depths beyond. We admit, that it is a manifestation of that which a finite creature can comprehend; but it is not a manifestation, and never can be, of that, which is above comprehension, of the ALL in ALL.

6.—We say, therefore, that there is, and can be no manifestation, which either does or can exclude the principles and the applications of FAITH. Out of the limits of the Trinity, beyond the pale of that intercommunion which exists in the persons of the Godhead itself, all holy beings, whatever their rank and whatever name they bear, live in the same manner. Faith is as truly necessary to the inward life of an Angel or of a Seraph, as it is to that of a redeemed sinner here on earth. They see further, it is true; and it is probably the case that the manifestation of God corresponds to

the increased length and breadth of their vision ; but beyond their power of sight and of all present knowledge, enlarged and bright as it is, there is still a region undiscovered, a vast land unknown. A land, where even angelic minds have never travelled, and which can be reached and explored only by faith.

7.—When we take the view of the subject, which has now been given, no language can express the value, which we should attach to this wonderful principle ; it being impossible, in the nature of things, for God so to manifest himself as to exclude its necessity and importance. And we may add, if all beings, angels as well as men, must live in this way, must live by faith alone, must live so *now* and live so *forever*, then it is hazardous to desire any other method of living. Satan understood the nature and tendency of such desires, when, in support of his fatal proposition to Eve, he said, “*your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*” Be content, then, to acknowledge, that there are some things in God, which the human mind never can fully know. And this being the case, be willing to live by believing ; and neither think nor desire to live in any other way. Be willing to see every outward light extinguished, to see the eclipse of every star in the blue heavens, leaving nothing but darkness and perils around, if God will only leave in the soul the inner radiance, the pure bright lamp which faith has kindled.

8.—It will be noticed in what we have said, that we admit the doctrine of limited manifestations. God

may manifest himself to a certain extent, and he does so. He manifests the fact of his existence by the works, which he has made. He manifests also, in the same manner, some of the incidents or attributes of his existence, such as his wisdom, his power, and goodness. And it is certainly possible for him, departing from the usual method of his proceedings, to manifest himself, even at the present time, in special or supernatural sights and sounds, in displays and visions of heaven and of earth, which shall be impressive to the outward senses. But what we contend for is, that such manifestations do not constitute, and cannot constitute the real knowledge, or rather the knowledge of the nature of the I AM ; but are only a *sign*, adapted to the nature of our capacities, that the I AM *is* ; that he has certain attributes ; and that there is yet something beyond what the eye sees and the ear hears and the intellect knows ; a region of existence, vast, unmeasured, infinite, which belongs to faith. Thomas, the doubting disciple, believed, as far as he could see, and only because he could see. Jesus said to him ; “ Thomas because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. *Blessed are they, that have not seen, and yet have believed.*”

9.—The love of manifestations, of that which is visible and tangible, in distinction from that, which is addressed to faith, is one of the evils of the present age. Men love visions, more than they love holiness. They would have God in their hands, rather than in their hearts. They would set him up as a thing to be

looked at, and with decorated cars would transport him, if they could realize what their hearts desire, from place to place, on the precise principles of heathenism ; because, being weak in faith, they find it difficult to recognize the existence, and to love and to do the will of an "*unknown God.*" But this was not the religion of the Apostle Paul. "As I passed by," he says to the Athenians, "and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, *him I declare unto you.*" We must be so humble, so sunk in the depths of our own nothingness, as to be willing to receive, worship, and love the *God unknown* ; and who, because he is infinite, and man is finite, always must be unknown in a great degree ; except in the MANIFESTATION OF HIS WILL. It is in his will, *believing* that his will is righteous, that we may meet with him, may know him, may rejoice in him, may become one with him. "BELIEVE in the Lord your God ; so shall you be established."

CHAPTER SECOND.

RELATION OF FAITH IN GOD TO FAITH IN THE CREATURE

Man so formed that he must have faith in something. The precise rule or principle applicable to our faith in man. We may trust in men so far as they have God in them and not otherwise. Results of faith in God compared with the results of faith in men.

IN remarking on the relation of faith in God to faith in the creature, it will be kept in mind, that we are speaking of *religious* faith, in distinction from natural faith. It is undoubtedly true, that as natural men, that is to say, as men without religion, we may properly exercise a degree of confidence or faith in others, considered as natural men. Perhaps we may say, it is unavoidable. Man is so constituted, that he naturally and necessarily has faith in something. He cannot live without it. If a man has not faith in God, it is a matter of course, that he has faith in something which is not God. And just in proportion as that faith, which is due to God, fails to be placed where it is due, it will invariably be found to be given and placed somewhere

else. Those, therefore, who have not faith in God, are consistent with themselves, and consistent with their fallen nature, in placing faith in men. They cannot well do otherwise. Man, such as he is, and with such power as he can impart, is their support. In a word, by the very fact of not placing faith in God, who is the "I AM," the ALL in ALL, and by placing it in man, they **make man** their God. This is natural; it is the unavoidable result of the natural life.

2.—The religious man, considered as a religious man, (that is to say, considered as acting for religious objects and on religious principles,) cannot place faith in his fellow-men, except in a certain way and on certain conditions. The degree and the mode of the faith, which is to be exercised by the religious man in his fellow creatures, are to be determined by the relation which exists between God and man. It is well understood, that God and man sustain certain definite relations to each other; God as the Creator, man as the created; God as infinite in knowledge, man as comparatively knowing nothing; God as all powerful in the possession and control of all things, man in himself considered as entirely without strength. The relation in the objects of faith furnishes the rule, which regulates the relation of the faith itself. Accordingly if as christians, we exercise faith in God, and at the same time exercise faith in man, it can be so only under the restriction and on the condition of keeping faith in man in proper subordination, by making it conform precisely to the relations actually existing.

3.—And on the principle just laid down, we may undoubtedly, as religious persons, have faith in man, just so far as he is entitled to the exercise of faith. And he is entitled to faith, just so far as he is in union with God ; deriving from God, who is the source of all good, that true strength and wisdom, of which he is naturally destitute. If we trust in man under other circumstances, that is to say, independently of God and out of God, we trust in that, which is obviously full of weakness ; and may be said, in the most emphatic manner, to “lean upon a broken reed.” The principle, therefore, is, that, as religious men, we cannot place any real confidence in our fellow-men, considered in their natural life, or merely as men ; but can have confidence in them only as they themselves have faith in God, and may be regarded as in some degree partakers of the divine nature. If as christians we have faith in God as GOD, namely, as a being possessed of all wisdom, all goodness, all strength, and as the true source of wisdom and strength to all other beings, we shall have no inducement, nor can any reason at all be suggested, why we should repose confidence, except in the subordinate manner already mentioned, in any other being. To do it would obviously imply a secret distrust of God, and could not be otherwise than offensive to him.

4.—So that it comes to this. As christians, have faith in God ; and have faith in that, and that only, which has God in it. Whenever and wherever you can see the divine nature in the human nature, “ God

manifest in the flesh," by meekness, purity, and love, so far you may trust. So far as God is not there, you can trust only as you would trust that which is without true wisdom and without true strength; which is the same thing as to say, that there is, in reality, no place for trust. So that it is easiest and shortest, because it is wisest and truest, to say, *trust in God only*. Throw aside every other support. Reject every other refuge. Consider man out of God as what he really is, *nothing*. And looking to him, who is just the opposite, the All in All, say, in the significant and beautiful language of the Psalmist, "My soul, wait thou *ONLY* upon God, for my expectation is from *him*."

5.—He, who has faith in himself and his fellow-men, exclusive of faith in God, or just in proportion as God is excluded, is known by a disposition to resort to human arts, and to rest strongly in human policy. And as a natural consequence of this, when the looks and the sayings of men are favorable, we find him cheered with increased hopes drawn from that source; but when the current of public sentiment sets in opposition, we see too clearly, that he is filled with despondency and dismay. Still, deceived by his own worldly spirit, he does not cease to place his hope where he placed it before. Even in his sorrows and disappointments, he casts upward no strong look of confidence towards God; or rather does not look towards him at all. But relying upon human strength, he continues to resort to those artifices which conciliate popular favor, while God is forgotten. And thus, deceived himself and de-

ceived by others, he can find no true refreshment and strength of soul, because he applies to that "broken cistern, which can hold no water."

6.—On the other hand, the man, who has true and full faith in God, has no confidence, no faith in the creature, except as God's instrument, as being under God's direction, and as attended by God's blessing. It is very proper, undoubtedly, and is entirely consistent with what has been said, to have faith in our fellow-men, and to have faith in ourselves, considered as God's instruments, as reflecting God's image, and as operating in the line of God's providences ; or in other words, to have faith *in God in us*. But it is not proper and it is not safe for us, as we have already seen, to have faith either in ourselves or in others, independently of God. The man, who has true faith in God, and who in having such faith is a true Christian, cannot do it.

7.—We have already had occasion to notice, that, when our actions repose upon faith in men, considered in their natural life, and *do not succeed*, we are full of trouble. We look to this one and to that one in the hope of consolation ; but we fail of finding a place of true rest. It is just the opposite, when our faith is placed where it ought to be. Trusting in God, we find all things to be made equal. Disappointment may afflict us ; but it cannot disturb our serenity. Heavy trials, addressed to our natural sensibilities, may wring from us the tear, but cannot cause the heart to rebel. The pangs and anguish of nature, trying though they

may be, cannot break the repose of the inward spirit, which strong faith has brought into unity with God. We can always say, "ALL IS WELL."

CHAPTER THIRD.

RELATION OF FAITH TO THE EXTINCTION OF SELFISHNESS.

The selfishness of the human heart subdued by faith. Explanation of the nature of selfishness. The operation of faith, in the subjection of unholy or selfish desires, two-fold. Of faith as operating by love. The object of the Gospel to sanctify, as well as to redeem. The heart cannot be sanctified by works without faith. Reference to the experience of Martin Luther.

WE proceed now to the consideration of some topics, which are more strictly appropriate to the leading object of the SECOND PART of this Work. In considering the Power or Effects of faith in the regulation of Man's Inward Nature, our attention is first directed to a striking passage in the writings of John. "Whatsoever is born of God," says the Apostle John, 2d. Epis. 5 : 4, "OVERCOMETH THE WORLD. And this is the victory, that overcometh the world, *even our faith.*" The term world, as it is employed by the Apostle in this

passage, is obviously of wide import; including the world inward, as well as the world outward; the human heart, as well as the objects around us, to which the inward state gives their character and their power. And, accordingly, the victory over the world, whatever else the expressions may be supposed to indicate, includes especially and emphatically the *victory over ourselves*. Perhaps we ought to say, it is the victory over whatever sin has rendered inordinate and evil in ourselves. In other words, and still more definitely, it is the victory over SELFISHNESS; a victory, which places us in such a position, that the world, in the variety of its enticements and temptations both inward and outward, cannot reach us and touch us to our hurt. And this victory is by *faith*.

2.—Selfishness shows itself, in a special manner, in the inordinate action of the *desires*. Desire, it is well understood, is a distinct tendency or principle of the human mind, known by the circumstances of its origin and by its being distinguished in our consciousness from every other state of mind; but it is worthy of notice, that it exists, and that it exhibits itself under different and important modifications. In its connection with the wants and laws of the physical system, it assumes, for instance, the well known modification of the Appetites; a class of natural principles, which are necessary and right in their origin, but which are frequently perverse and debasing in their application. The desire of personal happiness, the desire of society, the desire of knowledge, the desire of esteem, and

others which might be mentioned, are other modifications of the same general principle ; less closely connected with the physical nature than the appetites are, and distinguished for this, and for other reasons, as the Propensive principles or the Propensities. But these, as well as the appetites, are subject, under the influence of inordinate self-love, to a perverted action ; not so gross perhaps and so debasing, but still not less real and not less sinful. Our natural Affections also, the affection of parents for their children and of children for their parents and other similar affections, (a still higher and more noble class of natural principles than those which have just been mentioned,) have desire for their basis, and may very properly be regarded as its modifications. Each and all of these principles or classes of principles are liable to assume an inordinate and wrong position ; and in point of fact it cannot be doubted, that they do frequently and almost continually go astray under various circumstances and in various degrees. But it seems to me, so far as a judgment can be formed in the case, that they never assume a wrong position, that they never become perverted and sinful, except under the influence, (an influence as secret and extensive, as it is baleful,) of the vice or crime of *selfishness*. Even when these principles err by undue weakness as well as by excess, which is sometimes the case, the result can be traced to the influence of the same inordinate love of self, operating in a different direction, but destroying by what it takes away as well as by what it gives.

3.—Selfishness is the great evil of our nature. In the natural mind, or the mind which has not true faith in God, and which in not having faith in God necessarily makes man its God, it not only exists in the highest degree, but exists always. It reigns there, as if in its own kingdom, and on its own throne. And the history of the church generally, as well as of individual man, conclusively shows, that, if it is ever overthrown and removed from its position, it must be done in the way indicated in the passage from John, which we have quoted. “And this is the victory, that overcometh the world, *even our faith*.” It is faith, which possesses this wonderful power. It is faith in God, inspired by the operation of the Holy Ghost, which begins the contest with the dreadful evil, that naturally exists within us. It is faith, which sustains us in the progress of this trying and oftentimes doubtful conflict; it is faith, which ultimately gives the triumph.

4.—The operation of faith, in the subjection of irregular and unholy desires, under whatever name they may appear, may be regarded as two-fold, DIRECT and INDIRECT. The method of its direct operation is this. Faith attaches itself to all those scriptural declarations, which promise assistance in the struggle for inward and spiritual victory, and having entire confidence that God will be true to his declarations, it gives great decision and energy to the inward purpose. The man, who has this faith, feels strong. He may be a man, who in the indulgence of his Appetites has been the slave of great sensuality, but in the exercise of faith, he feels strong;

not in himself, but in God. And although he has experienced the mighty power of the principles, against which he is to contend, he has no doubt, that success will follow. In this position of mind, victory, with the divine blessing, is a matter of course.

5.—But this is not all. “Faith works by love.” If we have strong faith in God, we shall have great love to him. If our faith be assured or perfect, our love will correspond to it in degree. Now the natural tendency of love to God is to regulate and restrain all unregulated and unrestrained love of that, which is not God. The soul sees very clearly, that all such unregulated and unrestrained love of the creatures, whether it be the love of a man for himself or of others with a selfish reference to himself, is offensive to God; so that the love of God and the unregulated and wrong love of the creatures are antagonistical in their very nature; and the former love, if it exists in the highest degree, always implies the entire regulation and purification of the latter.

6.—So that with these two sources of influence combined, viz. the direct influence of faith, and that influence, which, operating by means of love, is indirect, the soul, by the expulsion of selfishness, may be restored to its true position, and in the possession of the purity and fullness of love, may become right with God. It is here, in particular, that we find the source of power and control over the Appetites. They can be truly said, when the subject is rightly considered, to be subdued and to be kept in their place by faith, and by

faith alone. But this result, *in its full extent*, cannot take place by the ordinary action of faith ; but only by a high degree, perhaps by that degree alone, which is denominated ASSURANCE.

7.—Now we desire it to be kept in mind, that the great objects of that atoning and remedial system, which is revealed in the Gospel, *are not secured by forgiveness alone*. Christ died not merely to save sinners, but to sanctify them ; not merely to rescue them from hell, but to make them, by the purification of their natures, the fit heirs of heaven. Salvation is a state, not a locality. It does not consist in dwelling in the new Jerusalem ; but in having the right inward *state* ; that is to say, in being *fit* to dwell there. A soul, that is truly and permanently saved, is a soul, that is made truly and permanently holy. And the hope of salvation, (even in that inferior and secondary form, which consists in freedom or salvation from suffering,) can be sustained only by the consciousness of possessing a heart, which, in some degree at least, is made right with God.

8.—It is to this great result, therefore, and to this great work, that every individual is called. “Be ye holy,” says God, “for I am holy.” “Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect.” The law of God’s holy nature would not allow him to command less or to require less. His mighty heart of love is fixed upon the one great object, that all other hearts, that all other moral beings throughout the universe may be in unison with himself, and bear his own image. It is

this, still more than mere forgiveness or pardon, great and wonderful and costly as that is, which constitutes salvation. And if it is a great work, considered in reference to its results, it is great also, considered in reference to the difficulties, which perplex it.

9.—But difficult as it is, God, operating by the Holy Spirit in the production of faith in the heart, can accomplish it. Human nature, instigated by distrust of God or by confidence in its own efforts, has attempted the work in other ways, and by other instrumentalities, but always in vain. It has found all its toils and all its sufferings useless, its fastings, its pilgrimages, its macerations, its many tears, its fixed purpose of being better and of doing better, of no avail when unattended by faith. They are nothing, and perhaps we may say, are worse than nothing, except when they are yielded as subsequent in time and in cooperation with faith. Undoubtedly some persons have made the attempt, (ecclesiastical history, especially that part of it which exists in the shape of religious biographies and memoirs, furnishes abundant proofs of it,) to gain the victory over their inward sins, and to sanctify themselves by a system of works, who have been ignorant, in a great degree, of the true principles of the Gospel on this subject. They have made the attempt, therefore, as it is probable, with a considerable degree of natural sincerity; with a real desire, according to the light which they possessed, to become what the Lord would have them to be. And God, who always regards real sincerity of feeling, even when it is perplexed by igno-

rance, has in many cases blessed them. But the result invariably has been, that they see at last, and acknowledge at last, that any system of human effort, which does not consist in simple cooperation and union with the antecedent presence and operation of the grace of faith in the heart, is without avail. So that the first great work of man, the first indispensable work, indispensable for sanctification as it is for forgiveness, indispensable now and indispensable moment by moment *forever*, is to BELIEVE.

10.—The statements made in relation to the early life and religious experience of Martin Luther, may perhaps throw some light upon this subject. Earnestly desirous of living to God sincerely and wholly, it is said of him, that he “gave himself up to all the rigors of an ascetic life. He endeavored to crucify the flesh by fastings, macerations, and watchings. Shut up in his cell, as in a prison, he was continually struggling against the evil thoughts and inclinations of his heart. Never did a cloister witness efforts more sincere and unwearied to purchase eternal happiness.”——At a somewhat later period, he was in the city of Rome; and although he had received some greater light than at the period, to which we have just referred, he seems not as yet fully to have understood, how we can be forgiven and sanctified by faith in Christ alone. “One day,” says the writer of his life; “wishing to obtain an indulgence promised by the Pope to any one, who should ascend on his knees what is called *Pilate’s Staircase*, the poor Saxon monk was slowly climbing

those steps, which they told him had been miraculously transported from Jerusalem to Rome. But, while he was going through this, [as he supposed,] meritorious work, he thought he heard a voice like thunder speaking from the depth of his heart: **THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.** These words, which already on two occasions had struck upon his ear as the voice of an angel of God, resounded instantaneously and powerfully within him. He started up in terror on the steps up which he had been crawling; he was horrified at himself; and struck with shame for the degradation, to which superstition had debased him, he fled from the scene of his folly."

11.—This remarkable passage of Scripture, **THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH**, "had a mysterious influence," the historian of the Protestant Reformation further remarks, "on the life of Luther. It was by means of that word, that God then said, *Let there be light, and there was light.*—It is frequently necessary, that a truth should be repeatedly presented to our minds, in order to produce its due effect. Luther had often studied the Epistles to the Romans, and yet never had justification by faith, as there taught, appeared so clear to him. He now understood that righteousness, which alone can stand in the sight of God; he was now partaker of that perfect obedience of Christ, which God imputes freely to the sinner, as soon as he looks in humility to the God-man crucified. This was the decisive epoch in the inward life of Luther. That *faith*, which had saved him from the fear of death,

became henceforward the soul of his theology ; a strong hold in ever danger, giving power to his preaching and strength to his charity, constituting a ground of peace, a motive to service, and a consolation in life and death.” *

12.—If the views, which have been presented in this chapter, are correct, it is not necessary that we should retire from the world, as if we were unequal to the contest which presents itself. It is not necessary, after the manner of some devout persons of other ages, to shut ourselves up in cloisters or to seek some solitary cave of the desert, in order to gain the victory. Mingling in the world, in the midst of our families, in the discharge of the ordinary duties of life, it will be with us according to our faith. We may have God with us, if we have faith to have him with us. And having God with us, who is ready to bear the banner and fight the battles of those who trust in him, we are enabled here, and are enabled every where, in the market and the forum as well as in the solitary place, in our workshops, amid our farms and our merchandize, in seasons of joy and of sorrow, to keep our hitherto rebellious tendencies in subjection. The injunction of the Apostle becomes a practical reality. “Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

* D'Aubigne's Reformation in Germany and Switzerland, Bk. 2d.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

SELFISHNESS INCONSISTENT WITH THE STATE OF PURE LOVE

The affection of love has its laws of origin. Love, originating in faith, tends to restrain and regulate the other passions. The soul can love only one object supremely. Man is selfish when his love centres in himself as its supreme object. Selfish also when his love centres in other beings inferior to God. God alone the proper centre of love. Where supreme love exists, all other principles will be properly regulated. Assured or perfect faith the true source of purity or perfection of love.

LOVE is not a passion, which can properly be called *accidental*. In any and every being, that has the capacity of loving, this benevolent affection will arise, and increase, and decline according to its own laws of origin and progress. And if we have a right view of the subject, it is one of the laws of its origin, that love always rests upon faith as its basis. If we have faith in the creature, exclusive of faith in God, then our affections will centre in the creature. If we have faith in God, then our affections, either in whole or in part, will take a different direction; attaching themselves to God as their object, and being more or less strong, according to the degree of our faith.

2.—In the last chapter the position was taken, that faith subdues that selfishness, which is the great evil of man's nature, in part at least, by an indirect action ; viz., *by giving origin to love*. We had occasion to make the general remark, to this effect, that the natural tendency of love to God is to regulate and restrain all unregulated and unrestrained love of that, which is not God. This view is so important, that we think it necessary to delay upon it in the present chapter.

3.—Additional to the general law, that love rests upon faith, there are other permanent principles or laws, which it may be proper to refer to here. And one is this. Of the various objects, to which love is directed, it will always be found, that those objects will not all be loved alike ; but some will be loved more, and some less. Of two objects or of many objects which essentially differ in their *attractions*, in other words, in their power of exciting love, it can never be said that the soul loves them both, or that it loves them all in an equal degree. The love of the object will be in proportion to the attracting power of the object, considered in relation to the soul.

4.—And in accordance with these views, it may be said further, that, among these various objects there will be some one, on which the love of the soul will rest and satisfy itself in the highest degree ; in a degree which may be expressed by the term *supremely*. The soul, in the exercise of its affections, must necessarily have a centre of love somewhere : viz., in the object which is *most* beloved. And that object will be the

most beloved, and will constitute the centre of love, which possesses for the soul the highest attractions. The love of other things, which have less attractions for the soul, cannot fail to be subordinate. It is true, that the soul may take a degree of satisfaction in those objects, which are inferior or subordinate in its love. But it is in the *supreme* object of its affections, and in that central and supreme object alone, that it will rest and delight itself with *supreme* satisfaction. It is there, emphatically, that the heart is. There is the *centre*, and it is infinitely important that every man should know what that centre is in his own case.

5.—The centre of man's love, (we do not say his love, but the *centre* of his love,) must be either in himself, or in other creatures, or in God. He may love all in different degrees; and he may love all in that manner at the same time; but he cannot have a *centre* or *supremacy* of love in all at the same time. He either loves God supremely, or he loves other beings, which are inferior to God, supremely; or he loves himself supremely. There does not seem to be any other supposition to be made in the case.

6.—Our first remark, in connection with what has been said, is this. If a man's love centres in himself as the highest or supreme object of his affections, which it must do, if it do not centre in some other being, he is of course a selfish being; and as such he cannot be regarded as a truly holy being. If he thinks for himself, acts for himself, lives for himself, as he must do if he himself be the highest object of love, it must be suf-

ficiently obvious without any comment upon it, that he cannot be otherwise than selfish, and cannot be otherwise than unholy. All such love, which thus centres in ourselves, is wrong, and is not acceptable in the sight of God; *because it is not proportioned to its object, and is inordinate.*

It may be proper to add this remark here, that pure love or holy love is that *love which is precisely appropriate to the object*; being such, neither more nor less, as the object is precisely entitled to, so far as we are capable of understanding what the object is.

7.—A second remark is this. If our love centres in creatures inferior to God, and becomes supreme in them, it is necessarily selfish; as really so, though not so obviously so at first sight, as if it centered in ourselves. It is entirely obvious, that the motive for loving inferior beings in the highest degree, for loving them *supremely*, cannot be founded in their own characters. It is not a love, to which they are justly entitled. It is not right to love them in this manner. And if the motive of this love is not founded in their characters, and is, therefore, not based upon moral rectitude, it is founded, and must necessarily be so, in some selfish modification of our own feelings. The only active principle in man, which is antagonistical to rectitude, is selfishness in some of its modifications. Whenever a moral being deviates from the right, in any and all cases where he has a perception of what the right is, it will be found to be through the influence of self. In all such cases, if a being is loved otherwise than it ought to be, and is

therefore loved *wrongly*, selfishness will always be found at the bottom. It will sometimes be very secret and almost hidden ; but it will always be there.

8.—A third remark is this. God alone is the proper centre of love. God alone, in consequence of the exalted nature of his perfections, is the object, to which our highest affections can properly attach themselves. If God is not loved supremely, something else is, because the nature of love is such as to require some highest object. And if God is the *centre*, (an expression, which implies, that our love is essentially, if not absolutely proportioned to its object,) then he is so in such a degree and manner, that all other beings are regarded and loved in their relation to him. Being not only the highest or supreme object, but being so beyond any and all comparison with other objects, he is properly the *centre of centres*. Consequently, receiving all our springs of action from him, as the great object of our affections, we shall regard objects, so far as we are capable of understanding their nature, just as he regards them ; we shall love what he loves ; hate what he hates ; rejoice in what he rejoices in.

9.—The moment we get into this great and true Centre, every thing else falls into the right position. We love ourselves, and we love other beings just as God would have us ; for we can neither approve nor disapprove, neither love nor hate, except as we receive the spring of movement from the great source. In any other position of mind, the influence of self will be felt. But in this, as the mind operates in perfect coincidence

with the will of God, a will which never deviates from perfect rectitude, it can give no countenance to selfishness, which is always at variance with rectitude. The life of God in the soul and the life of self in the soul are entirely inconsistent with each other. Where God exists, as the supreme object, self is, and must be cast out. Sensuality ceases. All our appetites, and all our propensities and affections of whatever degree will, in that case, be properly regulated. And the grace of sanctification or holiness will pervade the whole inner man.

10.—It is proper to add here, in accordance with what was intimated at the commencement of the chapter, that the love, which in being supreme makes God its centre, never exists, and it is not possible that it should ever exist except in connection with and as the consequent of a faith, which has the same centre, and exists in the same degree. Faith is the foundation. Faith is the deeper principle ; although it must be admitted, that love is a state of mind, which, generally speaking, is more distinct in our consciousness, and is more obvious to common apprehension and remark. When, therefore, we have faith, we have all that is necessary for us, provided we have all the faith, which God requires us to have.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

RELATION OF FAITH TO THE REGULATION OF THE PROPENSIVE PRINCIPLES.

On the regulation of the desire of life. On the regulation of the desire of society. On the regulation of the desire of knowledge. On the desire of the favorable opinion or esteem of others. Of faith in its relation to the principle of veracity. The desire of our personal good or happiness. General remarks.

THE Appetites, which always attract especial attention as having usurped a dominion over man to which they are not entitled, are tendencies or desires, which are closely connected with the necessities of our physical system. In the remarks which have been made in a former chapter, we have seen in what manner they may be regulated and purified. The propensive principles, which are more closely connected with the necessities of the mental nature, and are generally regarded as sustaining a higher rank, are liable to be perverted, as well as the appetites ; and need continually the purifying influences and the restraints of sanctifying grace. And if faith, by its action either direct or indirect, can purify and subordinate the lower principles,

which are so often perverted and are known to be so violent in their perversion, there is no reason to suppose that it has less of regulating and sanctifying efficacy in its application to other and higher parts of our nature.

2.—The desire of life, that is to say, the desire of the preservation and of the continuance of life, is not, in the proper sense of the terms, an Appetite; but it is obviously an implanted principle of our nature, which may properly be denominated a PROPENSITY. He, who has faith, may be said, just in proportion as he has it, to take his “life in his hands,” as the Scriptures express it, and to hold it at the divine pleasure. The anxieties, which afflict others, and which often render their lives a burden, do not, in a great degree, trouble those, who believe. Admitting, as they cannot well do otherwise, the correctness of the common remark, that in life we are in the midst of death, and admitting all that can be justly said of our constant exposure to various sufferings, they leave the issues of their earthly being in his hands, who gave it, without disquieting solicitude. The season of danger, even when the natural instincts take the alarm, is not a season of distrust and unholy fear; and when in the course of divine providence, the hour of dissolution comes, it comes rightly and well. “Is not the life,” says the Savior, “more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?”

3.—The social tendency, another strong Propensive

principle, requires to be sanctified. Man does not and cannot regulate, as he ought to regulate, his intercourse with his fellow-men, without faith in God. He must have faith in something. And, so far as we can judge in the case, it is obviously a law of his nature, that he will attach to men all that faith, which he withdraws from God. Without faith in God, he will be likely in many cases to make his fellow-men the object of his idolatry; and will bestow upon them, unwisely and wickedly, that confidence and affection, which ought to be given somewhere else. Or it may be that without faith in God, he may make *himself* the object of his idolatry, and may thus in some cases not only withhold from God what is due to him, but may also withhold a proper degree of social interest in those around him. Whether we seek the society of others too much, or avoid it too much, we shall find in either case, that the evil influences of selfishness are at the bottom, and that we are violating a moral and religious duty. Faith, which in its applications and results makes us do what God would have us do, furnishes, in this case as in others, the only safe regulating principle.

4.—The desire of knowledge is another principle, coming under the same general class of mental tendencies, which requires regulation; but which never can be regulated without faith. As those, who are desirous of making God's law the rule of their conduct, we are at liberty to know only what God would have us know. It would certainly be absurd to suppose, that the principle of curiosity, one of the most powerful

principles in our mental constitution, operating for the most part during all the moments of consciousness, and involving in its action immense consequences both to ourselves and others, is permitted to act without being responsible to law, and without incurring either guilt or merit. In this thing, as in other things, we must trust ourselves with God ; believing that he will furnish opportunities of knowledge, and will give strength in the pursuit of knowledge, whenever his providence and his law impose duties which render knowledge desirable and necessary. Remain, therefore, in the attitude of waiting upon God, who gives light to the understanding, as well as renovation to the heart. Neither yield to fear on the one hand, nor to the suggestions of eager desire on the other. As christians we ought not to desire, and we certainly do not need any light, which comes from the world or from a worldly spirit ; but the illumination, which comes from God's wisdom and God's will, is indispensable. And it is so, because it is precisely that kind and degree of light, which is adapted to the situation in which his providence has placed us. And this light he will never fail to give us, if in humility and consecration of heart we are willing to trust him for it.

5.—The person, who is in the exercise of a high degree of faith, has right views and right feelings in relation to the opinions of his fellow-men. He is not likely to attach either too high or too low a value to such opinions. It is well understood, I suppose, that God has implanted within us a Propensive principle, which may properly be described as the **DESIRE OF ESTEEM** ;



in other words has given us a natural regard for the opinions of men. The Scriptures also, in recognition of this principle, frequently speak in such a way as to imply the high estimation, which they place upon a good name, "a good report," or a good reputation among men. It is no part of christianity, therefore, always and absolutely to disregard their opinions. But there are times in every man's life, when, if he is faithful to truth and to duty, he may reasonably expect to be erroneously estimated, and to be the subject not only of wrong opinions, but of wrong and false accusations. But he, who places a calm and full trust in God, will fear no evil. He can say with the Apostle, "*It is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment.*" When we are troubled at every little misapprehension of our conduct, and are in a hurry to set it right, lest, perchance, our good name should suffer; or when in solitary inactivity we repine over the cruelty and injustice of our fellow-men, we give unhappy evidence, that UNBELIEF, the fruitful source of so many and great evils, is still lingering and flourishing in our bosoms. He, who in the exercise of belief has abandoned his heart to God, is strong in the consciousness of the divine protection, and is not afraid, when called to it in the discharge of his duty, of being either despised or persecuted.

It is a remark of the author of the *Imitation of Christ*, that some men will "suffer but a *certain degree of evil*, and only from *particular persons*." The man, who, by the annihilation of self, and in the exercise of

strong faith, is truly abandoned to God, makes no distinctions of this kind. He submits himself to the blow of the smiter without any reserve ; giving thanks to God that he is accounted "worthy to suffer," by any instrument or in any degree. He has nothing to say, when the will of the Lord has once manifested itself, as to time or place, degree or agencies. He takes the cup, with all its bitter ingredients, just as his heavenly Father has mingled it. He adopts the language of the Savior, "The cup, which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it ?"

6.—Among the Propensive tendencies may properly be reckoned the principle of Veracity ; that is to say, the disposition, which is evidently natural to the human mind, to utter the truth. It would not be easy to exaggerate the importance of this principle ; but it is well known, that there are influences at work, originating in selfishness and in unbelief, which frequently pervert its action. But if unbelief is the enemy of the correct action of this important principle ; faith, on the other hand, is its strong friend. I think that it is one of the striking evidences of a man of strong faith, that he both speaks the truth, and has confidence in the truth. In his intercourse with men, he does not speak rudely and unkindly, but he tells his simple, unvarnished story in a simple and true spirit. "His yea is YEA, and his nay, NAY." He may sometimes speak with emphasis ; but never with exaggeration. He may regard, as he ought to regard, the proprieties both of language and of manner ; but he cannot, as a man of true faith in God,

attach to his statements any embellishments of word or any devices of action, which will alter, even slightly, the aspect of the reality of things. And accordingly, believing in God as a God, who has declared of himself, that he cannot lie, and deeply desirous of bearing the divine image in this respect as well as in other respects, he utters his words in humble but unchangeable sincerity and uprightness; and although he is conscious that they are unsustained by the artifices of unbelief, he knows equally well who will make them good in the end.

7.—Another of the Propensities, which may be regarded as implanted or connatural to us, is the principle of SELF-LOVE; in other words, the desire of our own happiness. It is natural and right to desire our own good or happiness; it is unnatural and wrong not to desire it. But in the natural man, the man who is without true faith in God, this desire is exceedingly apt to exaggerate itself and to become inordinate. The man of faith, subordinating all his desires of personal good to that standard which God has established, is willing and desirous to trust all his happiness, whether it relate to the present or the future, with that great and good Being, who never does otherwise than right. He may be a wanderer from his country with Abraham, he may be sold into exile with the young but believing Joseph, he may undergo all the deprivations and sorrows of Job, of Jeremiah, and of Daniel, and yet find a consolation and support in faith, which is as wonderful as on any natural principles it is inexplicable.

He, who has truly resigned or abandoned himself to God in the exercise of faith, will remain calm, peaceful, and thankful, under interior as well as exterior desolation. The common forms of Christianity will, in general, be found capable of supporting what may be called outward desolation, such as the loss of property, reputation, health, and friends. But a state of interior desolation, in which we have no sensible joys, no inward illuminations, but on the contrary are sterile alike of edifying thoughts and quickening emotions, and are beset continually with heavy temptations, (a state to which the people of God are for wise reasons sometimes subjected,) is, generally speaking, far more trying. In this state, as well as in that of exterior trials, the mind that has abandoned all into the hands of God, will wait, in humble and holy quietness, for the divine salvation. Faith remains; a firm, realizing, unchangeable faith. And the language of the heart is, under the keen anguish which it is permitted to experience, "though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

8.—In concluding the remarks of this chapter we wish to say, that there is one great principle, existing in connection with the higher forms of religious experience, which is worthy of special notice; and which may possibly throw light upon, and may help to explain some of the statements, which have now been made. It is a principle which it is hard for the natural mind to receive, and which it is hard for any mind to receive, in which the natural life remains in much degree of strength. It is this. Every thing which occurs, with

the exception of sin, takes place, and yet without infringing on moral liberty, in the divinely appointed order and arrangement of things; and is an expression, within its own appropriate limits, of the divine will. And consequently, in its relations to ourselves personally and individually, it is precisely that condition of things which is best suited to try and to benefit our own state. On a moment's reflection, it will be seen that this important principle raises us at once above all subordinate creatures, and places us in the most intimate connection with God himself. It makes the occurrences of every moment, to an important extent, a manifestation of God's will, and consequently, in every such occurrence it makes God himself essentially present to us. Every event, coming within the range of our cognizance, necessarily brings God and our souls together. And it naturally follows from this view, that every thing which takes place, whatever it may be, inasmuch as it is a revelation, within its appropriate limits, of God's presence and God's will, should be met in the spirit of acquiescence, meekness, and entire resignation.

9.—But it is impossible, as it seems to us, to possess that humbled and acquiescent state of mind, which is requisite to meet God as he thus manifests himself, moment by moment, in his providences, without faith. It is the nature of unbelief to look at every thing in the light of second causes, which necessarily excludes God from any present and immediate agency. Faith restores God to events, and makes him present in all things that

take place. Faith identifies every thing with God's superintendence, and makes every thing, so far as it is capable of being so, an expression of his will, with the exception already mentioned, viz., of *sin*. And even in regard to this, faith proclaims the important doctrine that sin has, and ever shall have, its limits; and that Satan, and those who follow him, can go no further than they are permitted to go. To say, therefore, that a man is entirely acquiescent in the will of God, and is united in the will of God, is nearly the same thing as to say that he is a person of strong faith. There is a difference, it is true. Nevertheless, strong faith, or rather assured and undoubting faith, cannot fail to be followed by this state. Such faith not only makes God present in every thing, but works in us a disposition to regard him in every thing, and to submit to him in every thing.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

POWER OF FAITH IN ENABLING US TO BEAR PATIENTLY THE DEFECTS OF OTHERS.

The doctrine of faith requires patience with the infirmities of others. The crosses, which christians experience from this source, tend to their purification. Our own happiness, as well as our spiritual good, promoted by submission and patience under such trials. It is the will of God, that we should be afflicted ; and that we should be afflicted in this manner, as well as in others. Truly christian and holy persons have their defects.

THERE are but few practical directions, which are more important to those who desire to be wholly the Lord's, than the direction that we should bear with entire meekness and patience the infirmities and defects of others. The adoption in practice of any other principle than this necessarily involves us in continual disquietudes and troubles.

1.—We should bear patiently with the infirmities and defects of others in the first place, because the doctrine of faith requires it. The doctrine of faith, as was seen in some remarks near the close of the last chapter, will not admit of exceptions and distinctions.

We do not, and cannot, have acceptable faith in God, unless we have faith in him to the full extent of what he claims to be, and of what he is. We had occasion to make the remark in the passage just referred to, that faith restores God to events, and makes him present in all things that take place ; and also, in words nearly to the same effect, that faith identifies every thing with God's superintendence, and accordingly makes every thing, with the exception of sin, an expression of his will. The doctrine of faith, therefore, requires us to believe, that God, in his permissive will at least if not in his direct agency, sustains a connection, and sustains it for good and wise purposes, even with human infirmities.

2.—We should bear with patience the infirmities of others, in the SECOND place, because, in their results to ourselves, they evidently tend to our own purification. And this remark tends to illustrate what has already been said, viz. that God for wise purposes has a connection even with human infirmities. It is very clearly a part of God's spiritual economy to purify his people by means of the various crosses which he lays upon them. We are not at liberty to make crosses for ourselves, but are cheerfully and quietly to meet and endure them, when they come upon us in the divine providence. Now, the infirmities of men, the many and trying infirmities of all around us, are a cross, which the divine providence lays at our feet at every step of our progress in the path of life. To be obliged to meet and to bear these infirmities is an affliction, oftentimes a heavy

affliction. But it has a purifying power. It strikes a blow at self love. It makes us better.

3.—We should bear the infirmities of others meekly and patiently, because, in the THIRD place, to meet them in any other way is only to increase, instead of diminishing our affliction. To permit ourselves to be unduly disquieted and troubled, is to add interior affliction to that which is external; and that, too, with much injury in other respects, without any compensating gain. The indulgence of a fretful and repining spirit, whether it result from the infirmities of others or from any other cause, tends to weaken faith, to harden the heart, and effectually to separate us from God. On the contrary, he who manfully bears this cross, heavy as it sometimes is, experiences an internal support and blessing which is exceedingly consoling, and which truly makes the yoke of this temptation easy, and its burden light.

4.—In the FOURTH place, it is obviously the will of God that we should thus be afflicted, in a greater or less degree, in the present life. “In the world,” says the Savior, “ye shall have tribulation.” Christ himself was a man of sorrows; and God sees fit, for mysterious but wise reasons, that Christ’s people should also know the bitterness of grief. And one of the forms of affliction, to which we are subject here, is the grief which we frequently and necessarily experience in connection with the imperfections of our fellow-men. God is willing that we should in this way be reminded of our fallen condition; and he sees it also, as we have already intimated, to be for our good. As there is nothing so desirable

and glorious as being perfectly in the will of God, we ought to be not only resigned but happy, in experiencing an affliction which comes from the hand of Him, who doeth all things well. It will aid us in some degree, if we always remember, (which is sometimes not the case,) that afflictions which come through others, such as jealousies, misrepresentations, and various human persecutions, are as much afflictions sent upon us from our heavenly Father, as the physical trials to which we are subject. Christians have frequently experienced the practical benefit of this important truth. When, as they supposed, they had been misrepresented and injured by others, as soon as they connected with this unpleasant experience the idea that the hand of God was in it, they have found a sweet peace and resignation pervading the mind, which made even suffering delightful. And what was not the least beneficial result of this important view, it has enabled them at once to exercise the most kindly and Christian feelings towards those, who had been the wicked instruments of their suffering. Thus should the mind, in suffering as well as in joy, and in all kinds of suffering as well as all kinds of joy, soar above the creatures, and connect itself with God.

5.—We would observe, further, that these remarks apply to the afflictions we endure from the infirmities of those who are most advanced in religion, as well as to afflictions from other sources. Truly holy persons may at times entertain peculiar views with which we cannot fully sympathize, and may occasionally exhibit,

notwithstanding the purity and love of their hearts, imperfections of judgment and of outward manner which are exceedingly trying even to "those of the like precious faith." We naturally expect much more from these persons than from others; and hence the keenness of our sorrow, if, notwithstanding their exemption from intentional sin, there is not an obvious perfection of judgment, of expression, and of manner. But we must learn to bear with trials from this source also, always remembering, although we are permitted to indulge the humble hope, that there may be, and that there are instances of holiness of heart on earth, that absolute perfection exists only in another world. Unless we adopt this view, and act upon it, we shall be apt unnecessarily to distrust the profession and hopes of others, which would be a great evil to ourselves and to them.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

RELATION OF FAITH TO THE REGULATION OF THE AFFECTIONS.

Our attention chiefly directed to the sanctifying influences of faith. Faith necessary in the regulation of the affections, as well as of the appetites and propensities. Reference to Francis de Sales. Of affections which are inordinate in degree. Such wrong affections may be regulated by faith. Rule which will aid us in determining, whether our affections are inordinate or not. Of partialities or partial friendships. Of liberty of spirit.

THE outline of the scriptural doctrine on the subject of faith seems to be ; FIRST, that men are justified by faith, and SECOND, that, being justified, they live by faith. And accordingly it is said in one place, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ;" and in another, "the just shall live by faith." So much has been said on the subject of justification by faith, it having been almost from the commencement of the christian era, a leading subject of discussion, that it has not seemed to us necessary to occupy much time with it. And accordingly it will be noticed, that in this Treatise, and especially in this second Part of it, the attention of the reader is designed

to be directed, not so much to the justifying, as to the sanctifying influences of faith.

2.—A man may make the most decided efforts and may resort to all methods, to subdue and to bring back his fallen nature within the limits of God's appointment and law; but it will avail nothing without faith. Without faith, (not merely that faith which justifies but that which sanctifies,) the Appetites, which are not too low and degraded to become purified and holy, always exhibit an action, which is disorderly, uncontrolled, and evil. Without faith, the Propensive principles, which may be regarded higher in their position and influence than the Appetites, although lower than the affections, run into various forms and degrees of unauthorized irregularity and excess. And we may add, without going into particulars, that without faith in God, and without faith in Christ as the mediator between God and man, man's whole moral nature will inevitably show itself, as it always has shown itself, rebellious, perverse, and evil.

3.—We proceed now to apply these views to the Affections. Those natural Affections, which God has implanted within us, discover the divine wisdom and goodness. The perversion, which they often exhibit, does not destroy the evidence of their original beauty. Human nature would be far less lovely than it is, far less happy than it is, if the parent did not love the child, and the child the parent; and if there were not other domestic and benevolent ties, which bind together members of the same family, and those who are otherwise closely related.

4.—The Affections, (we speak now of the Benevolent Affections,) beautiful as they are in the place they occupy in the mental structure, and important and interesting as they are in their outward office, have felt, like every other part of our mental being, the effects of our depraved and fallen condition. They sometimes fall below their appropriate strength; but more frequently err, either in being wrongly directed, or in being inordinately strong. It is evident, from a slight inspection of what human nature every where presents to our notice, that they require a constant regulation; in other words, they need to be sanctified.

5.—I recollect to have noticed a remark, made in connection with the religious experience of Francis de Sales, which is worthy of serious consideration. It is found in one of the religious works of Liguori, entitled the Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ, as follows. "He was obliged to struggle hard to overcome his two predominant passions, anger and *love*. To overcome the former, he labored for twelve successive years, and to check the consequences of the latter, he changed the object of his affections, by transferring them from creatures to God." In order to possess a mind continually and entirely right with God, which seems to have been the great object of his efforts, we are informed, that he was obliged to struggle hard, not merely to regulate and overcome his anger, but to *overcome his love*; a statement, which implies, and as it seems to us very correctly implies, that there is no small degree of danger in the exercise even of this benevolent and enno-

bling affection. We all know, that there is danger of being inordinately angry ; but it does not so often occur to us, (which nevertheless is the fact,) that there is danger, if not equally great yet equally real, of being inordinately and wrongly affectionate. Against this danger, therefore, supposing it to exist, as it undoubtedly does exist, we are to guard with the same care, with which we guard against others.

6.—The subject may be considered under two points of view. In the exercise of those benevolent affections, which our heavenly Father has implanted within us, we love wrongly, when we place our love on wrong objects. We love wrongly also, when we love in an inordinate degree. The love, which is inordinate in degree, arises chiefly from the fact of our regarding the objects of it, such as parents, children, and other near relatives and friends, out of their due relation to God. Faith in God, especially assured or perfect faith, reestablishes the relation ; and requires us to love them in God's will, and according to God's law ; with an affection, which is neither wrong by its weakness nor wrong by its inordinate strength. As God, in the perceptions and estimate of an assured faith, is the sum of all beings, inasmuch as all are from him and in him ; so we are naturally and rightly required to love him with the sum, the wholeness or entireness, if we may so speak, of all our powers. And so long as we love God in this manner, God will help us to love all beings subordinate to him, at the right time and in the right degree. But we ought not to forget, that it is faith, which places God in

the right relative position ; and it is faith, which opens the strong fountain of love such as his infinite nature claims ; and it is faith, therefore, indirectly at least, which distributes this fountain to all subordinate beings from God downward to the lowest insect.

7.—We think it of some consequence to mention here one rule, which may aid us in determining, whether our affections, those of the most benevolent kind as well as others, are properly regulated or not. When our affections to any persons, however near and dear they may be to us, are found to be so strong at any given time or on any occasion as to disturb the clearness and precision of the intellectual action, we may be assured, that such love has become inordinate, and has some vicious element in it. A number of considerations go to show this.

8.—We may argue, in confirmation of what has been said, from the nature and operations of that love, which we are required to exercise towards God. It is the tendency of the true love of God, which is the same as the *pure* love of God, always to accommodate itself to what is right. Rectitude is the ultimate and unchangeable law of its operation. At this, by a tendency inherent in its own nature, it always aims, viz., to love rightly, to love just as it *ought* to love, not only the right object, but in the right degree. The right and wrong of things, the ought and the ought not, is made known to us, in connection with, and by means of the action of an enlightened moral sense. The moral sense, by a well known law of our mental constitution, de-

mands, as the condition of its own correct action, a clear intellectual perception. The action of the intellect must be undisturbed. The pure love of God, that is to say, the love which we exercise towards God, when it is unmixed with any merely human or selfish element, never causes disturbance in the intellectual action; but, on the contrary, is highly favorable to the opposite state. Where such pure affection exists, therefore, the right or rectitude of things may be expected to be clearly perceived, as well as strongly loved. But if the love of God, (that unmixed and pure love which alone can be acceptable to him,) does not disturb the perceptive or intellectual action, but on the contrary if its very nature requires a clear and calm perception of things, then it is very obvious, that the love of our earthly friends, the love of our neighbor, cannot safely be exercised on other principles, and cannot require less.

9.—Again, looking at the matter in reference to God himself, considered as exercising love towards his creatures, we may argue how man should love from the manner in which God loves. It is obvious, that love can never exist in any higher degree than in the Divine Mind; but it is certain that it never exists there in such a degree as to perplex, even to the smallest extent, the action of God's percipient or intellectual nature. God loves deeply and perfectly, for the very reason that he perceives clearly and perfectly. To love an object, without a clear perception of the nature of the object and of its claims to love, would involve the

hazard of loving imperfectly or wrongly ; a risk which can never, by any possibility, exist on the part of a perfect and holy being. Now it must be obvious, that love, in those who bear the divine image, will sustain the same relation to other acts and affections of the mind, as it does in God. To be born in the divine image always implies this, and implies it in the real and strict sense. If we love like God, our love will operate by the same law, which regulates God's love ; that is to say, we shall love both in such a manner and such degree as to leave the intellect unembarrassed and clear in the perception and estimate of the character of the object and of its claims to our love. When, therefore, in the exercise of our benevolent affections, the actual affection exists in such a degree as to perplex the perceptive and intellectual action, and to render our appreciation of the merits or demerits of the object confused and doubtful, we may be certain that we are wrong, that we are jostled out of the true centre, and that we have not God with us.

10.—The remarks, which have hitherto been made in respect to the exercise of the affections, have had a special reference to a wrong or inordinate *degree* of love. We may love wrongly also, when we knowingly place our love upon wrong objects ; or perhaps we should rather say in this case, upon wrong *persons*. And accordingly it is a part of christian duty to avoid wrongly placed and inordinate *partialities* ; those particular attachments to certain persons, which generally exist without adequate reason, and which are apt to be

attended with corresponding dislikes to other persons. We do not mean to say, that we are bound to bestow an equal confidence and an equal affection upon all persons alike ; but true christianity requires, that, where we make a difference, we should do it for reasons and on grounds, which God can approve. It ought to be more generally remembered than it is, that we have no more right to place our affections on objects or persons, irrespective of God's will, than we have to regulate and control our outward actions in disregard of his will. And it is implied in regarding his will in this case as well as in others, that we must have a heart humbly acquiescent in his providences, and must look to him in the exercise of faith, in order that we may be guided right. It is proper, therefore, to say to all, who desire to do what God would have them do, choose your friends in the Lord. Or rather look to the Lord, to choose them for you. And then you will be likely, not only to choose them right, but to keep them long. And what otherwise would fail to be the case, it will be a friendship hallowed by the divine blessing.

11.—And we may add this further remark. That devout condition of mind, which is expressed by the term holiness, requires, that we should do the will of God in all things ; or what amounts to the same thing, that we should do right in all things. But it is obvious, that partialities, inordinate attachments, loving one more than another without any reasonable grounds for making a distinction, perplex both our perceptions of right and our ability to do what is right. It is im-

portant, therefore, to keep our minds in that desirable state, so often mentioned by spiritual writers, which is denominated *liberty of spirit*; a state of mind, in which there are no disturbing influences, originating either from inordinate hatred or inordinate love, and in which the soul, acting under a divine guidance, may be moved with the greatest possible ease in any direction.

12.—We conclude what we have to say on this subject by a suggestion of a practical nature. When, in the exercise of our naturally kind feelings, we strive to do good to our fellow-men, by soothing their sorrows, by healing their dissensions, or in any other way, if we do it without a humble and serious eye to God's providences, we shall always find on a careful examination, that we do it in a considerable degree, if not entirely, without a believing regard to God himself. And accordingly, in attempting to do good in this way, viz., from the mere impulse of nature, without a regard to God and his providences, it will not be surprising, if, in many cases, we fail of our object, and do evil rather than good. God is present in *time*, as well as in events. There is always the right *time*, as well as the right thing; the right time, as well as the right action. The man of true faith feels it to be necessary to act at the right time, to act in God's time, even in doing those things, which are clearly of a benevolent nature. God holds the remedy of the evils, which exist in the world, in his own hands. His people are the instruments, which he employs, in applying this remedy. But the application is never made beneficially either to

the subject or the agent, except when it is made under his own superintendence, in his own time and manner.

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

OF FAITH IN ITS CONNECTION WITH THE MALEVOLENT AFFECTIONS.

Of the feeling of displeasure or resentment and its modifications. Displeased or angry feelings are sometimes allowable. Our anger, nevertheless, very liable to become intense or wrong. Of holy or just anger. Characterized by clearness of intellectual perception. Attended with the spirit of prayer. Attended also with the spirit of love and forgiveness. Holy anger implies a strong faith. Reasons for this view.

THE statements, which have been made in relation to the Benevolent Affections in the preceding chapter, will apply without much variation to some of those passions or affections which are of a different character. In making this remark we refer particularly to the feeling of Resentment and its various modifications, which are generally known as the Malevolent Affections.

2.—It is hardly necessary to say, that the feeling of displeasure, which is but another name for the feeling of resentment, when it exists in its milder or mitigated form, is a state of mind, which by the laws of our nature, is appropriate to wrong-doing. Of the nature of this feeling, it is not necessary to attempt to give any explanation, as it is too well understood in the consciousness of every one ; although it may properly be said, that the natural law of its origin and action requires it to be more or less intense, in accordance with the nature and degree of the wrong-doing. Such are the facts and relations of things, and such is the obvious and precise adaptation of the human mind to such facts and relations, that displeased or angry feelings not only come into existence by their own natural laws of origin ; but if they arise on their appropriate occasions, and in their appropriate degree, they seem to be justly regarded as right feelings. To look on wrong-doing, knowing it to be truly and deliberately such, without disapprobation and without feeling displeased, would itself be as really a crime, as the wrong-doing which is witnessed. And accordingly the Scriptures, if we rightly understand them, allow of displeased or angry feelings under some circumstances. God himself is represented as being displeased or angry, and as having abundant reason to be displeased or angry, on certain occasions. And there are statements in the Gospel, which either assert or imply the same thing in relation to the Savior.

3.—But it cannot be denied, that the anger of man,

vitiated as it is by the influences of inordinate self-love, is a very different thing on many occasions, and perhaps we may say on almost all occasions, from the calm and just anger of God. So much of selfishness has found its way into the human heart, that it is difficult for men, especially for those, who have personally suffered from the erroneous and evil conduct of others, to place themselves in the situation of the culprit, and to estimate with a proper degree of candor and of christian spirit the various unpropitious influences, which may have operated upon him. Continually looking at the wrong done, and especially at the injury which they themselves have suffered, they are in a position of mind, which almost necessarily exaggerates the evil dispositions of the guilty person; and which, reacting upon their own feelings of displeasure and anger, extends them beyond due bounds. So that man's displeasure, and man's anger, (anger being merely an increased or more intense degree of the displeased feelings,) are for the most part wrong or unholy; wrong in fact, but not wrong by necessity; wrong, because man is not solicitous and faithful in making them right, but not wrong, because they cannot be otherwise.

4.—There are a number of things necessary to make man's anger, like God's anger; or like that holy displeasure, of which we see some instances in the life of Christ, who in his human nature reflected perfectly the divine image. The divine displeasure, on whatever occasion called forth or in whatever degree,

never interrupts that beautiful and unchangeable tranquillity, which is an unfailing characteristic of the Divine Mind, and of all minds that bear the divine image. And, as implied in this, it never interrupts and disturbs the perceptive act; the clear insight and knowledge of the object, which occupies its attention. When, therefore, our anger is like God's anger, in other words when it is right anger, it will never be so violent, so uncontrollable, as to perplex the action and to confuse the clearness of the intellectual perception. And there is an obvious law of our nature, which authorizes and requires this view. Such is the structure of the human mind, that it is not possible for us properly to regulate it, without an unperplexed and clear action of our judging powers. Socrates said to his servant on a certain occasion; "*I would beat you, if I were not angry.*" The reason is obvious. Finding himself agitated, and knowing that agitation is unfavorable to a clear perception of rectitude, and that he could not then inflict punishment without the hazard of injustice, he delayed it, until he could be sure of doing what is right by first disciplining and rectifying himself. "He, that ruleth his spirit," says the Scripture, "is better than he, that taketh a city."

5.—Perhaps we ought to add here, that in these remarks we have more especial reference to deliberate and voluntary displeasure or anger, than to that modification of anger, which, in order to distinguish it, is termed *instinctive*. There is at times in man an instinctive resentment, arising very suddenly, but con-

tinuing only till the laws of the mind will permit the perceptive and reasoning powers to come to our aid, which during the brief time of its continuance is obviously beyond the control of reason and the will ; and which, therefore, may cause a momentary agitation of the physical system and a momentary confusion of the intellect, without our being able to prevent it. To this form of resentment, so far as it is truly and absolutely instinctive, it will be naturally understood, that the remarks, which have just been made, will not fully apply. And the exception, which is interposed here in regard to the Malevolent affections, might very properly be made in respect to those of a different character, which have already been considered. When it was held that the benevolent affections should be subjected to the control of the will and to the law of right reason, it obviously could not be meant, that the obligation thus to control them extends to that very sudden and momentary action, which is purely instinctive ; and which, in being such, is never reached by the reason and the will, and never has and never can have a moral character. And this can be said, we think, with safety to the suggestion, that if our instincts, as well as other parts of our nature, have become perverted and depraved in the Fall of Adam, so much so as properly to be described as fallen and depraved instincts, they have an indirect relation to the Atonement, and furnish grounds of humiliation and confession.

6.—One of the characteristics of that anger, which is like God's anger and is holy, is, that it leaves the

intellectual perception unagitated and clear. Another mark is this. If our anger is like God's anger, we shall be in that state of mind, which will enable us to bring our displeasure, and all that relates to it, to God for his direction and assistance. In other words, if we are so displeased, so angry, that we cannot calmly bring the matter before God and ask his direction and blessing in relation to it, we may be certain, that there is something wrong in it. There is nothing, as it seems to us, in joy or in sorrow, nothing in friendship or in enmity, nothing in any state of mind or in any situation of life, which authorizes the omission of prayer. And if we need it at any one time more than another, it must be in a state of mind so full of uncertainty and hazard as that which we are now considering. If, therefore, we are so displeased, so angry that we cannot pray, we may be assured that our anger is not like God's anger, and is wrong.

7.—Another characteristic of that state of mind, which is expressed by the Apostle, when he says, "BE YE ANGRY AND SIN NOT," is, that it must always be attended with a loving and forgiving spirit. One of the directions, which our blessed Savior has left to us, is, that we should love one another, even as he has loved us. He loved those who were his enemies; and we should love those who are our enemies. No one ever had greater occasion to be displeased with sin, than he had. And yet when he had before him exhibitions of sin of the most atrocious kind, when he heard the reproaches and saw the spears of the murderers as he

was suspended on the cross, and when as a holy being, whose very nature it is to hate wickedness, it was impossible that he should not be displeased, he still said, with the same loving and benevolent disposition he exhibited on every other occasion, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*" So that if our displeasure is like that of God or like Christ's, we shall always connect with those, who are the objects of it, the spirit of forbearance, of kindness, and of forgiveness.

8.—Another practical mark, which is involved in what has been said and flows from it, is, that we shall make no returns to the wrong-doing of others, either by advice or reproof, either by words or by action, until the time, in which they can be received with the most benefit by the other party. To be silent, when we are angry, is almost as sure a sign that our anger is right, as it is to pray; provided that we keep silence in order to maintain a suitable control over our own feelings, or for awaiting a more favorable opportunity for the good of the adverse party. Give no harsh reply under any circumstances. "Fire," says St. Chrysostom, "cannot be extinguished by fire." Be patient, and God's providence will at last discover the favorable moment, when the injurious party will be likely to receive your instructions and advice, and also your expostulations and rebukes, if it is necessary to bestow them, with submission and with profit.

9.—But taking the ground as we do, that no feeling of displeasure or anger is allowed to exist in a holy

bosom but such as God approves and such as is analogous to his own holy anger, the question now presents itself, How is it possible for us to be angry in this manner? How is it possible for us, knowing the nature of the feeling as we do in our own consciousness, to be angry without being agitated; to feel deeply and at the same time to perceive calmly and clearly? And still more, how is it possible to have feelings of displeasure and anger, and at the same time to be in the spirit of prayer, and also to have kind feelings towards the subject of our anger? We are aware, that this is a difficult problem for unsanctified nature to solve; but it is not beyond the reach and power of a vital christianity. The answer is, as every one, who knows what it is to live to God and to God alone, will anticipate, **WE MUST HAVE FAITH.** Human discipline, standing by itself, may perhaps do something; but faith will do more. Faith, aided by human discipline not as a principle but as a humble and dependent auxiliary, will do all.

10.—In the first place, God teaches us, or rather it is one of the received principles or doctrines of christian faith, that it is a part of God's plan, in the operations of his mysterious providence, to let wicked men manifest their wickedness. On the supposition that sin exists in the universe, of which we have such clear and melancholy evidence, God is willing, for purposes which are best known to his own infinite wisdom, that those, who have sin in their hearts, should manifest it in their conduct, in order that their condemnation, which fol-

lows in its own appointed hour, may be seen and known to be just. He is willing also, that those, who do not sin or whom he desires should be kept from sin, should see, in the lives of unholy men, the odiousness of sin. The Savior has himself said in language which has a significant and awful import, "*It is impossible but that offences will come.*"* The man of faith, therefore, knowing that sin develops itself in these relations and with these results, does not lose his confidence in God. He remains unshaken.

11.—In the second place, it is one of the received principles of christian faith, that God sometimes uses the wicked as instruments in the discipline of his own people. Perhaps the wrong doing of others manifests itself in injuries, of which we ourselves are the subjects. Seeing the agency of God, not in the sin but in the direction, which the sin is permitted to take in its relation to ourselves, the doctrine of faith in its inward operation would require us to be humble, to be patient, as those whom God, for wise reasons, sees fit to afflict. It is God's will, that we should be afflicted in this manner. The principle of faith, existing practically in our hearts, will enable us to receive this affliction humbly and patiently, as we do other afflictions.

12.—Again, God has promised in many passages of his holy Word, his aid and protection to those, who endeavor to fulfil his purposes by obeying his will. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." The man.

* Luke 17; 1.

who truly believes in God's veracity, and of course who believes in his promises of assistance, will find his purposes and efforts much strengthened by such belief. This, as is well known, is the result of a law of our nature, which is universal in its operation, namely, that we shall find our purposes strengthened and shall put forth the stronger effort, where we have some hope and expectation of succeeding. The man, therefore, who has this faith in God, will be much more likely to succeed in his attempts at keeping the angry passions under control, than one who is without faith.

13.—And then there is the promise of ultimate victory, (the promise not merely of assistance, but of triumph,) which can never fail to be fulfilled in the behalf of those, who look and who act for its fulfilment in a proper manner. We are told that all things shall work together for the good of those, who love God. Numerous are the passages of Scripture, which assure us in very explicit terms, that the wrath of the wicked shall avail nothing against the people of God. And the wrath of Satan, operating in the form of an inward temptation, will be found equally unavailing. Beautiful is the language of the Psalmist. "The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." It was said to the Apostle Paul, on a certain occasion of great trial, "*my grace is sufficient for thee.*" Under such circumstances we may admit that we sometimes have reason to be displeased and angry; we cannot love sin; we cannot be indifferent to

it. On the contrary, as those who love God, we must be displeased with it; we must hate it. But it is still true, whatever may be the fact or the ground of our displeasure, that we have no reason and no right, on scriptural principles, to be impatient. We have no reason and no right to be intellectually agitated and confused in our anger; we have no reason and no right to be unkind and unforgiving. God's will and God's glory, which are only other expressions for the highest reason and the highest rectitude, require the opposite. And what is reasonable and right, what is God's will and God's glory, faith in God will always render possible. And if faith can sustain us in temptations and trials of this nature, we need not fear, that it will fail us any where else. So true it is, in the language of the Apostle John, that, "whatsoever is born of God, OVERCOMETH THE WORLD. And this is the victory, that overcometh the world, EVEN OUR FAITH."

CHAPTER NINTH.

RELATION OF FAITH TO THE SUBJECTION OF THE WILL.

Of the true idea of the subjection of the will. Some general results of a subjection of the will. Extract from Cudworth. Some of the more specific results and evidences of a will subdued. The will brought into subjection and kept in subjection by the influences of faith. Reasons for this view.

It is not sufficient, that the lower principles of our nature are brought into subjection; it is not sufficient to possess affections purified and sanctified; God requires, in addition to these results and evidences of the rectification of our inward nature, the subjection of the will; an equally important and perhaps still more difficult work. One of the results of the highest christianity, a christianity far different from and far above that which is merely nominal, or which is but little better than nominal, is the **LOSS OF OUR OWN WILLS**. It is not meant by this, that we may not have a will different from that of our fellow-men, nor is it meant, that we may not have a strong, energetic will; but that we ought not to have, and that as Christians, who aim at the highest

results of the divine life, we cannot have a will of our own, in distinction from and at variance with the divine will.

2.—In this last sense, he, who approaches nearest to an annihilation of his own will, approaches nearest to the state of entire sympathy and harmony with the Divine Mind. The prostration of our own will, in such a sense that it shall not in any respect oppose itself to the will of God, seems to be the completion or consummation of those various processes, by which the inward spirit is purified. When the will in its personal or self-interested operation is entirely prostrated, so that we can say with the Savior, "Lo, I come to do *thy* will," then the wall of spiritual separation is taken away, and the soul may be said, through the open entrance, to find a passage, as it were, into God himself, and to become one with Him, in a mysterious but holy and glorious union. Then and not till then, can it be truly said that the warfare against God has ceased, and a perfect reconciliation taken place, enabling those who have arrived at this blessed state to exclaim with the Savior, (perhaps in a modified but still in a true and most important sense,) "I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE."

3.—"The highest mystery of a divine life here," says the learned and pious Dr. Cudworth,* "and of perfect happiness hereafter, consisteth in nothing but mere *obedience to the divine will*. Happiness is nothing

* Cudworth's Criterion of the true knowledge of Christ; a sermon preached before the English House of Commons, March 31, 1647.

but that inward sweet delight that will arise from the harmonious agreement between our wills and God's will. There is nothing contrary to God in the whole world, nothing that fights against him, but SELF-WILL. This is the strong castle that we all keep garrisoned against heaven in every one of our hearts, which God continually layeth siege unto; and it must be conquered and demolished before we can conquer heaven. It was by reason of this self-will that Adam fell in Paradise; that those glorious angels, those morning stars, kept not their first station, but dropped down from heaven like falling stars, and sunk into this condition of bitterness, anxiety, and wretchedness, in which they now are. They all entangled themselves with the length of their own wings; they would needs will more and otherwise, than God would will in them. And going about to make their wills wider, and to enlarge them into greater amplitude, the more they struggled they found themselves the faster pinioned, and crowded up into narrowness and servility, insomuch that now they are not able to use any wings at all; but inheriting the serpent's curse, can only creep with their bellies on the earth. Now our only way to recover God and happiness again, is, not to soar up with our understandings, *but to destroy this self-will of ours.* And then we shall find our wings to grow again, our plumes fairly spread, and ourselves raised aloft into the free air of perfect liberty, which is perfect happiness."

4.—It would be interesting to delay here and to illustrate some of the more specific results and evidences

of a will subdued. One result is, that the man, who has lost his will, in the sense which has been explained, namely, by an union of his will with God's will, HAS NO PLANS OF HIS OWN; his own plans, if in any sense we may call them such, being merged and lost in the general conception of the plan, whatever it may be, of God's overruling providence. He regards himself as merely an instrument; *God's* instrument; and he does not, and cannot feel, that his plans are so much his, as God's. We do not mean, in saying this, that he has no thought, no foresight; nothing "considerative" and prudential; but that in laying his plans, he asks the divine direction; and that, in the prosecution of them, he still asks the divine direction; and that, in the entire submission of his will, holding as he does the thread of his purpose as a divine gift moment by moment, his plans can be regarded as nothing more nor less than God's plans, begun, prosecuted, and either continued or abandoned as God chooses.

5.—Another mark or characteristic of the man, whose will has passed from his own unsafe keeping to the high custody of a divine direction, is this. He has no disposition to complain, when God, in the course of his providences, sees fit to send disappointments and afflictions upon him. This remark will apply not only to afflictions, which originate in the loss of health, of property, and of friends, but to all others of whatever nature, and coming from whatever source. We have sometimes thought, that the entire subjection of the will is seen particularly in the quietness and silence of

spirit, with which misrepresentations and persecutions are endured. That the people of the world should be greatly agitated, and should find in themselves the movings of a rebellious and belligerent spirit, when their motives are aspersed and their characters injured, is entirely natural. And, unhappily, when persecution arises, we see too much of this unquiet and rebellious spirit, even in those whom charity requires us to recognize as Christians. Not so with those Christians of a higher grade, whose wills act in perfect harmony with the divine will. That they are afflicted, when they are subject to unjust persecutions, is true ; but they are not rebellious ; they are not disquieted ; and although they are afflicted, it cannot be said with truth that they are destitute of happiness. Connecting with the instrument which troubles them, the hand of God, which permits the agency of that instrument, they regard the persecutions they endure as the lot which God has appointed them ; and as such they rejoice in it. But this could not be, if their wills, renouncing all private and selfish modes of action, did not move harmoniously with the divine will.

6.—The subjection or loss of the will discovers itself, among other things, by entire meekness and submission under those interior dealings with the soul, which are of such a nature as is calculated to try the faith of those who endure them. There are certain gifts of the spirit, or better perhaps, certain spiritual graces, which God seems to regard himself as pledged to give to his people ; gifts which it seems beyond doubt they may

always have for the asking, if they will only ask in the spirit of consecration and faith. God will never withhold from his people, if they are in a temper of mind to ask and receive them, the gifts or graces of purity of heart, of humility, of gratitude, of forgiveness, and love ; nor any of those pure and lovely traits of temper and disposition, whatever they may be, which characterized and perfected the nature of Jesus Christ. But there are other spiritual gifts, which belong rather to the intellect than the affections, and which may be described, therefore, if we may be allowed the expressions, as intellectual rather than "affectional," such as the gift of knowledge, the gift or power of ready and eloquent utterance, and the state of mind, sometimes found among the facts and incidents of christian experience, which may be described as a purely intellectual view or vision of heavenly things ; such a view, whatever it may be, as may be supposed to gratify the curiosity, rather than improve the heart. These things God gives or withholds as he pleases ; catching one up, like the apostle Paul, into the third heavens, where he sees and hears unutterable things ; and keeping another, so far as gifts and illuminations of this kind are concerned, in a state of comparative ignorance and abjection.

7.—Nor is this all. He oftentimes mingles bitterness in the cup of those, to whom he has given the purest and holiest affections ; leaving them not only to sorrows without, to which we have already alluded, but oftentimes to heavy sorrows within. But the Christian, whose will is entirely subdued, will drink this mixture

also. All he asks, and what he feels he *must* have, is HOLINESS ; and if with this cup of God and of angels, his heavenly Father sees fit to mingle some ingredient of bitterness, to remind him of his former sinful state, and to teach him more fully the way of submission, he cheerfully accepts it. God may take from him all mere intellectual manifestations of spiritual things ; he may even deprive him of the ordinary intellectual powers, and reduce him almost to a state of idiocy ; he may pour into his heart the deepest amazement and grief, and yet his language is, "Not my will, O God, but thine be done." He knows, notwithstanding his afflictions, that he is dear to God ; and that his name is written on the heart of infinite love. He knows that he is just in that place where God has seen fit and best to place him ; and that he endures just what God sees best he should endure ; and he would not even now, though thick darkness is around his path, exchange his position for that of angels.

8.—Without prolonging the remarks on this part of the subject, we would merely add, that the man, who has experienced the practical annihilation of his own will, does every thing and suffers every thing precisely *in the order of God's providence*. It is the PRESENT MOMENT, considered as indicating the divine arrangement of things, which furnishes the truest and safest test of character. Holiness requires the fulfilment of our whole duty ; and our duty necessarily has relation to the facts which God's providence now presents before us. If our whole soul goes forth in obedience

to what his holy providence now imposes on us, then, and not otherwise, are we acceptable in his sight. It is necessary, therefore, to keep our eye fixed upon God's order of things. We must do this in relation to our place and situation in life, whatever it may be ; not murmuring at our supposed ill lot ; not giving way to any eager desires of change ; but remaining quietly and humbly just where God has seen fit to place us.

9.—We must take this course, also, (which is sometimes a more difficult thing,) in relation to our duties. We must not only do the right thing, but must endeavor to do it in the *right time* : which is not *our* time, or that which mere human wisdom would suggest, but God's time. It is one of Satan's artifices, not merely to prevent the discharge of duties, but when this fails, to prevent the performance of them at the right time ; for instance, by infusing in us too great eagerness of spirit, and leading us in our hurry to anticipate the divine order. When he makes us do this, he secures his object in a considerable degree at least ; because if we do the precise thing which God requires of us, we nevertheless sin in the *manner* of doing it. It is of the highest importance, therefore, that we should keep our will in complete subjection to the divine moment, the moment of God, which is the present moment. The question which should be ever present, is, what does God require of me *now* ? And we are to remember, that God makes known his order in *parts*, and not as a whole ; he has *his own* plan and not ours ; and he reveals it in his own time and degree,

and not in ours. We must receive it, therefore, humbly and submissively, just as he presents it to us ; though, in the view of our limited understandings, nothing but clouds and darkness may rest upon the future. It is a mind in this position which God is pleased with ; which sees the divine developments in every thing that takes place ; and which, in every situation, walks in the simplicity of a will lost to itself, and found only in God.

10.—The question arises here, as in the other cases, how is this great work, *the subjection of the will*, to be effected ? And the answer must be repeated, which has already been so often given, that it can be done, so far as we can perceive, only by the operations and influence of FAITH. And in saying this, it can hardly be necessary to add, that we do not mean to exclude personal effort, in whatever form of resolve or of action it can properly be made ; although it is true, and always will remain true, that personal effort here, as elsewhere in the things of religion, will be unavailing without faith. And this is so truly and emphatically the case, that we cannot hesitate to speak of faith as the cause, and as the one great and preeminent cause of a result so desirable and glorious.

It is obvious, in the first place, that the man, who has no faith in God, can see no reason, and in the actual state of his views and feelings he has no reason, so far as he himself is concerned, why he should subject his will to God's will. To subject our wills is to subject ourselves. If God has the control of the will,

he has the control of the man. And no man, no rational being whatever, could be expected to subject his will, and thus to subject himself, to another being, however exalted he might be supposed to be, without faith in such being. It would obviously be against nature. That is to say, it is something, which in our apprehension is naturally impossible.

11.—We admit, that there may be, and that there sometimes is a subjection of the will, which is rendered on the principle of *fear*; the submission or subjection, which slaves render to despots, who bend their necks to the yoke, which they cannot shake off. Undoubtedly a subjection of the will of this kind may exist without faith. But this is not a subjection of the will, which is an attribute of God's people; nor is it such an one as God either values or desires. It is obviously not the submission, of which we are now speaking, or of which we are understood to speak; and therefore it is not necessary to delay upon it. And accordingly we repeat, that a subjection and union of the will such as God requires, is a natural impossibility, in other words is contrary to the laws and operations of the mind, *without the existence of faith as its basis*.

12.—We observe further, it is not only a natural impossibility; but, using the expressions in the sense which is common among writers on morals, it is a *moral*, as well as a natural impossibility; that is to say, it is a thing, which cannot be done, without doing what is wrong. God asks no control on his part, and no subjection of the will on the part of the creature, which

is not *right*, and which a rational being, acting in view of what is right, shall not feel bound to render. But as a rational being, as a being that is supposed to perceive clearly what is right to be done and what is duty to be done, man cannot surrender his will to another being, in whose character and in whose administration of affairs he has no confidence. It is morally impossible. And if it were otherwise, it would not be possible on the part of God, who asks only what is right and who receives only what is right, to ask or to receive a submission rendered on such terms. He asks no man's will, and will receive no man's will, as a thing separate from his FAITH; and for the reason which God can appreciate better than any other being, *it would not be right for him to do it*. There is a sense, undoubtedly, in which he may limit and control such a will, as something which may properly be guarded and ruled by a higher authority; he may restrain it in certain directions as something which without restraint would be hurtful in his universe; but to receive it into harmony with himself, which is always the result of that acquiescence and submission of the will which is attended with faith, is what he never ought to do; is what, as a just and holy being, *he never can do*. From the nature of the case, therefore, we may regard it as a fixed and unalterable law, that the will of the creature always will be, as it always has been under such circumstances, antagonistical to the will of God; and that there always will be, as there always has been, a con-

test between them, *so long as the creature remains without faith.*

13.—There is another view of the subject. The subjection or submission of the will, for which we contend, is an affectionate submission, a submission which has some elements of the *heart* in it, a submission of love. We do not mean to say, that the submission of the will is, psychologically or mentally, the same thing, with love ; but that it is a state of mind which implies love. And furthermore, the existence of love, as a necessary attendant upon it, gives to it one of its marked peculiarities, and a great share of its exceeding value. And it is this submission, therefore, the submission of the will in love, which God desires, and which he demands. But it is well understood, that the love of God, implies faith in God. To love him without having faith in his character as a good and holy being would be an impossibility. And, accordingly, looking at the subject in this point of view, we may confidently say the will is never truly subjected to God, is never subjected in that sense which alone God can accept, without faith.

14.—We assert, therefore, negatively, that there can be no submission of the will without faith. And we add, affirmatively, that faith produces or makes submission. But in laying down the affirmative proposition, it is obvious, that we must take into view the degree of strength, in which faith exists. So that the principle, stated specifically, would seem to be this. The submission of the will, by a natural law of the mind's operation, exists in connection with faith, corresponding in

degree, and being greater or less, in accordance with the degree of faith. Assurance of faith, therefore, or faith existing in the highest degree is always attended with entire submission or subjection of the will. Thus, in looking over the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, we find, that Abel, having faith, offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. Noah, in the exercise of faith, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. Abraham, believing in God that he is, and that he is the friend of those that diligently seek him, dwelt in a strange land ; and being tried, offered up Isaac, his only begotten son, of whom it was said that in Isaac shall thy seed be called. Moses, being a man of faith, forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king ; for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. Similar statements are made in relation to Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, Samuel and others, who in the exercise of faith, subdued kingdoms, stopped the mouths of lions, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens ; or on the other hand, had trial of mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonment, wandering in mountains and deserts, in dens and caves of the earth, of whom the world was not worthy.

16.—In such instances, which might be multiplied to almost any extent by a reference to the lives and acts of truly devoted christians in all ages of the world, we find a striking and satisfactory illustration of the fact, that the will, the natural exponent of which is outward action, will be in precise accordance with faith ; and that where there is an undoubting or assured faith, as

in the case of Abraham, Moses, Samuel, and others, there will be an entire subjection of the will. In other words it will be found to be true, whether we consult the statements of the Bible or the history of christians in any and every age of the world, that men of true and assured faith will do and suffer, just as God would have them do and suffer, which of course implies a will entirely resigned to God and entirely under his direction.

16.—And how can it well be otherwise? If we truly believe in God as a being possessed of every natural excellence, if we believe in him as a God present in all his providences, and ever watchful and faithful for the good of his people, and if at the same time we fully believe that in all his actions he is right and that in all his claims upon us he is right, there remains no reason, no possible consideration, no motive, why we should either desire on natural principles, or should feel under obligation on moral principles to possess a will, an aim, a purpose adverse to his. All ground or basis of movement in such a direction entirely fails. But every thing stands firm and effective in the other direction. So that it will not only be unnatural not to give our wills to God; but it will be impossible, (that is to say, it will be psychologically or mentally impossible,) not to do it. All the motives, which can be conceived of, those which have relation to our moral duty, all combine in the same direction; so that the laws of his being must cease to be the laws of his being and man must cease to be man, if, having full faith in God, he does not fully yield his will to God.

17.—And we cannot well leave the subject without reverting a moment more to the blessedness of a **WILL LOST**; that is to say, of a will lost to itself by its union with God. In reading the experience of devoted christians in former ages, I find no subject, on which they dwell with greater interest, or in regard to which they use stronger expressions. They saw clearly, if not as philosophers, yet as men taught by the Holy Ghost, that the subjection and regulation of the will imply the subjection and regulation of every thing else. And hence the profound remark ascribed to St. Augustine, that the true servants of God are not solicitous that he should order them to do what they desire to do; but that they may desire to do what he orders them to do; that is to say, that they may have no desire, no choice, no will of their own. He knew well, as other eminent christians in all ages of the world have known and have expressed, that there is no result so desirable, and no blessedness so pure and heaven-like, as that of entire union of the human will with the divine. And hence too the saying of St. Bernard, "*He, who destroys his self-will, destroys hell*;"* meaning Hell in its leading element or essence, and not in its locality. And we might add, that he not only destroys hell, but he makes heaven. He, who lives in his self-will, just so far as he does so, lives in hell; and he, who lives in the will of God, just so far as he does so, lives in heaven. As those, therefore, who have confidence in the power of

* As quoted in the D'Ouvrages Mystiques, Tauler, Ch. 14.

faith, may we be able, not only to inquire, in the words uttered by the Apostle, "*Lord what wilt thou have me to do ;*" but, what is still more important, may we be able also to answer the inquiry, in the words applied to the Savior, "*Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.*"

CHAPTER TENTH.

ON THE RELATION OF FAITH TO THE EXERCISE OF THE JUDGMENT.

Connection of knowledge with religious experience. Inference from this view in relation to the value of a sound judgment. Faith, favorable to a sound judgment, in consequence of tranquilizing the passions. Faith, favorable to a sound judgment also, because it frees the mind from the influences of private interest and prejudice. Favorable also, because it is adverse to undue eagerness and precipitancy of spirit. Favorable for the additional reason, that it is adverse to pride of intellect. Faith necessary to the philosopher. Its influence on the power of attention. "Judge not that ye be not judged."

WE have seen something in the remarks which have been made in some of the preceding chapters, of the mighty influence of faith in the regulation of the affections and the will ; but it is worthy of notice, that it has influence in other parts of our nature also ; and particularly in giving rectitude to the judgment. Knowledge, which is the result of the action of those perceptive and comparing powers, which we commonly express by the single term, the JUDGMENT, has a closer connection with a correct and thorough inward expe-

rience, than is sometimes supposed. True knowledge is the food of the purified mind ; that upon which it lives and gains strength. "*He, that hath the truth,*" says the Savior, "*heareth my voice.*" False knowledge, if we may call it such, or rather falsehood, under the semblance of knowledge, may be described, on the contrary, as the soul's poison. Looking at the subject in this point of view, it is not easy to appreciate too highly any thing, which gives precision and steadiness to those powers of the mind, in which knowledge has its source.

2.—In saying that knowledge has a close connection with correct religious experience, it is hardly necessary to add, that we do not mean mere scientific knowledge, nor any of the various forms of worldly knowledge, whatever they may be, which have exclusive reference to worldly objects. We mean such knowledge, including, of course, some knowledge of the divine character and of the principles of the divine administration, as will enable us to form a ready and just appreciation of the will of God, moment by moment. In other words, we mean a knowledge, (which like all other knowledge depends instrumentally upon the perceptive and judging faculties,) of what is precisely right in feeling and action, on every occasion in which we are expected, in the course of God's providences, either to exercise feeling or to put forth action. If such knowledge is important, as every christian will cheerfully testify that it is, we repeat again, that it is not easy to appreciate too highly any thing upon which the precision and steadiness of the judgment depends.

3.—In proceeding to the more particular illustration of this subject, we remark, in the first place, that one of the greatest hindrances of correct judgment is inordinate excitement of emotion and passion. Whatever may be the cause of it, it is well known, that, when the passions are excited in a considerable degree, the mind finds it difficult to perceive the relations in propositions, particularly those which are of an abstract nature, and to combine them together so as to deduce the true result. And accordingly if a person has before him some difficult subject for examination, one requiring either by its results or its nature a careful and strong mental effort, we generally find him very solicitous to be freed, during the process in which he is engaged, from all exciting and passionate influences. It is hardly necessary to say here, after the remarks which have been made at various times, that faith in God tends to subdue and calm every thing of this kind. And I think it may be said with truth, that it is a matter of common christian consciousness, which christians will verify by their testimony, that when they are in their best religious state by strong faith and by consequent freedom from worldly passions, they are in the best condition to decide promptly and correctly upon all questions, whether moral or prudential, which require their attention.

4.—There are also certain secret or hidden influences, which are as really, though not so obviously adverse to the perception of the truth, as those more marked and violent ones, which have just been noticed ;

we refer to the secret influences of private interest and private prejudice. Every degree of faith, even the smallest, tends to do away these unpropitious influences; and where faith is strong, especially when it exists in such assured and undoubting strength as properly to regulate the affections and to subdue the will, they disappear altogether. The man of faith is from the very fact of his having faith, a true man, a just, and honest man; and not more strictly honest than truly liberal. He knows that the God, in whom he believes, loves an upright, an honest heart. And he knows also, that the God, in whom he believes, and whose image he bears, is a God of love, and can afford, in the fullness of his mighty resources, to be as benevolent to all beings under all circumstances, as rectitude will allow. He can not only afford to be so, but his nature, (not merely the benevolence of his nature, but the justice of his nature,) will not allow him to be otherwise. And as the natural tendency of belief is to make us like those in whom we believe, and as those who fully believe in God are transformed by the fact of belief into the divine image, their judgment is just on the same principles as that, on which the Savior speaks of his judgment as being just. "MY JUDGMENT IS JUST;" says the Savior. And why? The answer involves a principle, which is worthy of being held in continual and cherished remembrance, as disclosing the invaluable secret of a just judgment in all time, in all places, and in all hearts. "My judgment is just, be-

cause I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."

5.—One of those things, which are unfavorable to sound judgment, is an undue eagerness, a precipitancy of spirit, which looks earnestly and interestedly to the end without a suitable consideration of the intermediate steps; a state of mind, which the French spiritual writers happily denominate by the single term, "*empressement*." Christian faith not only removes that undue excitement, which has already been mentioned, and which may arise from a variety of causes; but is also, as it seems to us, the best and only sure corrective of this unseemly and dangerous urgency; this ZEAL OF NATURE, if we may so designate it, in distinction from the pure and calm zeal of grace. The truth is hidden in God; IN him, OF him, and FROM him; *in* him because God is true; *of* him, because all things that come from God are characterized as they come from his hand by being made in the truth; *from* him, because all beings that desire and seek the truth, must look to him for it. To the truth, therefore, God can never be indifferent; neither to its nature, nor its dissemination, nor its results. And he, who has faith in God as the source of light to all that seek light, as the giver of truth to all that humbly seek the truth, will find no difficulty in being patient, in delaying his conclusions when there is a want of adequate evidence, in reflecting, comparing, and praying for divine guidance. The perceptive and judging powers, exercised under such circumstances, can hardly fail to ascertain the

truth. Not the *absolute* truth always, which implies a knowledge of all possible facts and relations ; in other words, not the *whole* or all possible truth always ; but the TRUTH ; that kind of truth and that degree of truth, be it more or less, which God in his beneficence and wisdom sees to be precisely fitted to our intellectual capacities and our moral wants ; that truth, which the Savior declared to those who believed on him, should make them free. “Then said Jesus to those Jews which BELIEVED on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed ; *and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*” John 8 : 31, 32.

6.—One of the favorable effects of faith on the exercise of the judgment is, that it is adverse to the pride of human intellect. When we speak of faith in God, we mean God as he is ; not a God who is dwindled down to the compass of man’s imagination, but *God as he is* ; God illimitable, God omnipotent, God who reveals himself in every thing that is made, but who in every thing that is made indicates also that there is something not revealed, and something which cannot be revealed. The pride of human intellect cannot stand in the light of such a presence. The man of true religious faith, the man who has faith, not in the idol of his own imagination, but in God as he is, reverting from the Infinite Mind to his own mind, begins at once to feel that he has no intellectual strength, no true wisdom, no purity of love, and no foundation of hope, except what he derives from a divine source. “The

most enlightened of men," says Robert Hall, "have always been the first to perceive and acknowledge the remaining obscurity, which hung around them ; just as, in the night, the further a light extends, the wider the surrounding sphere of darkness appears. Hence it has always been observed, that the most profound inquirers into nature have been the most modest and humble."

7.—Philosophers need faith. And some of them, who have sustained a distinguished rank, Pascal, Leibnitz, Boyle, Newton, Locke, Edwards, Cudworth, and others, have not hesitated to recognize this need. They need faith, not merely that they may in this manner obtain strength to prosecute their inquiries ; but that they may possess that true humility, which has just been mentioned as characteristic of profound inquirers, and which, checking the arrogance of nature, will enable them to stop at the right point. The person, who has faith in God *as God*, not merely as a being exalted but as a Being *Infinite*, sees clearly, and may be said perhaps to have a sort of instinctive perception or feeling, that there is something in God which man does not know, and which it is not possible for him to know. And as a consequence of this, inasmuch as God is in every thing and as every thing is dependent on God, there is something in every object of inquiry, a line of demarcation, a limit between what can be known and what cannot be known, which baffles forever the efforts of human cognition. No matter what the object is. It may be the simplest thing in nature ; it may be the vernal leaf or the summer flower, the morning dew

or the noon-day sun-beam. The known and the unknown lie there together ; that which may be comprehended by the finite, and that which can be known only by the Infinite. The philosopher, who has faith, being taught of God, understands this. But the philosopher, if we may call him such, who has not faith, dashes proudly against the barrier, which constitutes the limit of human knowledge, and proposes, with a hardihood but little short of blasphemy, to explain on philosophical principles the process of making or unmaking God himself. But he has gone beyond his strength. His problems and his theories, his flights of fancy and his concatenated reasonings, all lie overturned and in broken fragments at his feet. He stands confounded. And others see, and happy will it be, if he himself sees, that the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men.

8.—The doctrine of religious faith involves the doctrine of *living by the moment* ; that is to say, of giving to the present moment the whole amount of our present powers, on the obvious ground of its involving the whole amount of present duty. In other words, a living faith, resulting as it does in a holy heart and life, tends to prevent mental dissipation, and to fix the mind upon one object, the appropriate and all important object, namely, that which the present moment brings before it. Such a mind necessarily forms the habit of strict and profound attention. It is not perplexed in its action by a frequent tendency to fly off from its present inquiries, and to bewilder itself in other subjects which are not connected with them. It is superfluous

to say, that such a state of mind is exceedingly favorable in the investigation of the truth. The mind, that is capable of fully giving its attention, other things being equal, will be much more correct in its judgments than other minds.

9.—We will only add, without further prosecuting a subject which is equally interesting and important, that faith in the heart is the true regulator of that disposition, so widely prevalent, and oftentimes so unjust and so dangerous, of judging the characters of our fellow-men. The judgment of men's conduct and characters, if it be a just and full judgment, implies the additional fact of a judgment of their *motives*. But if men are baffled in their inquiries into the nature of a tree or plant, of a drop of water or a grain of sand, ought they not to distrust their powers and to be slow in their decisions, in a matter so remote from direct observation and involving so many elements, as the judgment of human motives. If there be any one thing, which may properly be described as God's prerogative, it is that of judging the heart. The man, who has faith in God, will not be hasty in passing a judgment upon the characters of his fellow-men, because faith is the natural and only effectual extinguisher of those various rivalships and jealousies, which are the frequent and injurious sources of hasty judgment. Nor is this all. He will not judge in this hasty manner also, because he feels that God's command, to which faith gives a practical import and power of which it would otherwise be destitute, is binding upon him. "JUDGE NOT, THAT YE

BE NOT JUDGED ; *for, with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."*

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

RELATION OF FAITH IN GOD TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE WILL OF GOD.

Importance of a knowledge of God's will. Difficulty in relation to it. God's will obvious in its general features, but not so much so in particulars. Not God's design that men should always have positive knowledge. It is his design that his people shall live by faith. Faith in religion takes the place of knowledge, where knowledge does not exist. Explanations and illustrations of the subject.

It is difficult to appreciate too highly the value, which we should attach to the will of God ; a will which is always consonant with the highest rectitude, and always tends to the highest happiness. And it is equally difficult to state too strongly the obligation, which rests upon every individual, to bring every thought and feeling and action of his life into harmony with the divine will. Many persons appear to admit

the existence of this obligation in its full extent, **while** they assert their inability to fulfil it, on the ground, **that** in particular cases and instances of duty they frequently do not know what the will of God is. They are willing to do what God wills ; but their willingness is rendered unavailable by their ignorance. It is true, that a judgment enlightened by God's Holy Spirit, will do much ; and yet much remains to be done. They may know something : and yet much more remains to be known. This exceedingly perplexes them.

The doctrine of faith, considered in certain applications and results, which we shall proceed to point out in this chapter, precisely and adequately meets this difficulty.

2.—We remark, in the first place, that God may be regarded as having clearly made known, in his Word, his Providences, and in man's mental constitution, the great outlines of his will. It is his will, that we should fulfil the great ends of our being by doing justly, by showing mercy, and by rendering to our Maker under all circumstances the sincere and unlimited homage and love of our hearts. So that the difficulty does not seem to be in knowing the will of God, in the more general sense of the terms ; that is to say, in knowing it in its general features and outlines ; but in ascertaining what it is, in connection with the duties, trials, and emergencies of *particular occasions*. Is it the will of God, that, in my setting out in life, I should adopt this calling or profession, or another that presents itself to my consideration ? In the multiplied and ap-

parently conflicting duties which each day presents to our notice, shall I yield to these claims, or those? Shall I go to this place or that? When the urgent calls of necessary business seem to conflict with the claims of the poor and the suffering, shall I go to my farm and my merchandize, or shall I visit the chamber of the sick, and break bread to the hungry? Such are the questions, multiplied to a wonderful extent, which present themselves almost every day in the course of man's busy pilgrimage.

3.—We proceed to remark further, that in many cases of this kind, where the motives which are presented are various, and the paths of action are divergent, it is not easy for us to know, with *absolute certainty*, what course of action will most fully accord with the divine will. Constituted as we are at present, we may well pronounce it impossible to have such knowledge, except by means of a specific revelation given in each case. And we may even go further, and say, it is not the *design* of our heavenly Father, that, in matters of this kind we should always have a knowledge which is positive, and should always walk in a vision which is open. This is not God's plan of action. Far from it. Under the administration of an omniscient Being, whose knowledge, because it is omniscient, can never be explored, by created minds, it is a necessary law of all subordinate holy beings, whether they be men or angels or archangels, that they must live and act, in a considerable degree at least, *by faith*. It is

true, that even in this life there is something of **what** may conveniently be called "open vision;" it is **true**, that the faith of the present life will in many things **be** exchanged for a still higher degree of open vision **in** the life to come; but beyond the open vision, both **of** the present and the future, beyond the open vision even of the highest angel, there still exists a land **un-**known, a universe which has not been explored, **an** ocean of things, and of the relations of things, of being and of action; an ocean wide as the omniscience of God, where created minds have never travelled. And in all this vast expanse, Faith, operating in a different sphere, but not differing in its nature, is the true light of heaven, as it is now, and always must be, the true light of earth. Angels and beings that dwell in the very bosom of God, walk by it.

4.—We repeat, therefore, that Faith is the one great law of the life of holy beings. Like the law of attraction, which is universal and reaches every particle of matter, however minute and however remote, it reaches and keeps in its position every moral being that is united to God as its centre. But it is hardly necessary to add, that the very nature of faith implies, that it is antagonistical to open knowledge. God, therefore, in a multitude of cases does not design, (and such is the difference between the finite and the infinite, that he cannot design,) that we should live by such knowledge.

5.—What, then, shall be done? If God does not reveal his will as a matter of positive knowledge, how

can we be expected to walk in it? *The doctrine of the life of faith precisely meets these inquiries.*

But in ascribing the answer to inquiries of this kind to Faith, inquiries which constantly arise in connection with the duties and the trials of life, we should remember, among other things, that a life of true faith is a life of *entire consecration*. And in this state of consecration, which always and necessarily implies a freedom from prejudice and all personal influence, we come and present the case of difficulty, whatever it may be, before God. With simplicity or singleness of heart, in other words, with the single motive of doing his will, we supplicate his direction. And while we are thus seeking the divine guidance, we also exercise those powers of reflection and judgment, which our heavenly Father has given us for the express purpose of being faithfully and conscientiously employed on their appropriate occasions. Under these circumstances, let us decide as we will, let us turn to the right or the left, let us advance or retreat, it is our privilege and our duty to believe, that we take the right course: in a single word, that we are right, because the Lord guides us.

6.—In adopting this view, and in making these remarks, it will be naturally understood that we mean the right course in *the moral sense of the terms*. The prayer for divine direction, offered up in the spirit of consecration, which implies a heart wholly given to God, and offered up also in entire faith, which receives the promises of God without wavering, necessarily involves the result, that the course taken, whether it be

conformed to *natural* wisdom or not, and is attended with the best natural results or not, is *morally* the right course, and is *entirely acceptable* to God. A man in that state of mind may commit a physical or prudential error; he may perhaps take a course which will be followed by the loss of his property or an injury to his person, but he cannot commit a moral error. That is to say, he cannot commit an error, which, *under the adjustments and pledges of the Gospel*, will bring him into a state of moral condemnation, and will have the effect to separate him from God and God's favor. The mistakes of judgment, if any such exist, are compensated by the rectitude of the heart. The humble and sincere uprightness, which exists there, taken in connection with the arrangements and promises of God, cannot fail to rectify and to make every thing well in the end.

7.—It is the prayer of faith, therefore, involving, of course, an act of an entire consecration to God, which possesses the wonderful prerogative of leading us into the *right*, without *knowledge*, and even against knowledge. And hence it is, on the principles which have been laid down, that God, who always requires us to do what is right, so often shuts up the avenues of knowledge in particular cases of conduct, that we may do right by *faith* without knowledge. Faith is God's light in the soul; and he may be said, in a multitude of cases, to extinguish the light of knowledge, that he may kindle up the light of faith.

8.—We are aware, that it may appear extraordinary

to some persons, to speak of doing right by faith without knowledge. But delay a moment, and notice the precise import of these expressions, which obviously convey a great truth. What, then, is their true meaning? It is precisely this. In those cases, where we are destitute of positive knowledge, we must form the best judgment we are able, looking to God with sincerity and singleness of purpose and in full faith also, that he will guide us aright. And the judgment which is formed under such circumstances, although it rests upon faith, and never in itself ascends above probability, yet becomes practically, and in the moral sense, KNOWLEDGE. That is to say, it answers the purpose of knowledge; and without being knowledge really, it is knowledge virtually.

9.—And we may now go further, and say, that in acting in accordance with the results which we thus obtain, we always and necessarily accomplish the will of God. We know his will, while in a certain sense we may be said to be ignorant of it; because it is his will, that we should live and act by faith without knowledge. “I adore all thy purposes,” says Fenelon, “without knowing them.” This is the great work of holiness, to do the will of God, while we know it, and can know it, only in part. Living by faith without knowledge, is living in the truest divine light. What did Noah know, when he entered into the ark; when he sailed on the tops of mountains, with nothing around him but clouds and storms? He knew nothing, but he *believed*. What did Abraham know when he conducted

his son Isaac to Mount Moriah to be sacrificed? Like Noah, he knew nothing of what was before him, but he had faith in God. In acting by faith, which took him from the control of self and placed him under the control of God, he necessarily accomplished the will of God, and it was "accounted to him for righteousness." When we are led in the way of faith, we are led by God himself; and it is impossible for God, by means of spiritual operations, to lead his people in a way, which is contrary to his own will. And being in his will, though it be a blind way to human sight, we are not profitless. "The blinded beast," says Molinos, "that turns the wheel of the mill, though it seeth not, neither knows what it does, yet it does a great work in grinding the corn."

10.—These principles afford great consolation. Oh, the blessed simplicity of holy living; not more wonderful in its results, than in the simple nature of its methods! God always accomplishes the greatest results by methods, which men despise for their simplicity. Go on, therefore, beloved in the Savior, in this safe and living way of faith. Your way may be dark to human vision; but faith will make it light in the Lord. The uncertainties of God, when enlightened by faith, are far better than the knowledge, which the world can give without faith. Thou art blindfolded as to outward vision, but still there is an eye that sees for thee. Follow the safe way of the true light! Other lights, on the right hand and left, may arise to dazzle and bewilder. It is the light of Faith only, which God kindles, and which leads to the blessed source, from which it came.

CHAPTER TWELFTH.

ON THE RELATION OF FAITH TO INWARD CRUCIFIXION.

Of the crucifixion of the inward nature. Importance of the subject. Reference to the Mystics. Of the suffering involved in inward crucifixion. Statements illustrative of inward crucifixion. Extract from Tauler. Inward crucifixion implies the destruction of undue self-confidence, of inordinate self-seeking, and of all desire and love of every thing which is not embraced in God and God's will. On daily crosses. Inward crucifixion the result of strong faith.

A SOUL, right with God, is a soul *crucified*. A soul right with God, is a soul, which, in having undergone a painful death to every worldly tie, is a soul, which may be described, in the figurative sense, as being *nailed to the cross*. The crucifixion of the outward life, by a separation from outward error, and by doing right outwardly, is of far less consequence, in itself considered, and far less painful than the crucifixion of the inward life by doing and being right inwardly.

2.—The subject of inward crucifixion is one of no small interest and importance. It is a subject, which very seldom fails to receive a due share of notice in

those devout writers, who have endeavored to analyze and explain christian experience. In some writers, especially that remarkable class who are usually denominated the Mystics, and are so denominated, more than for any other reason, in consequence of their insisting so much on a new spiritual life in distinction from the old sensual life, it is a theme of especial interest and remark. Some of these writers, particularly Tauler, John of the Cross, Canfield, Catharine of Genoa, and Madame Guyon, denounce the natural life, the Old Adam, as they sometimes denominate man's fallen nature, with an unsparing, unmitigated eloquence, which, as it seems to us, finds no parallel except in the solemn and overwhelming denunciations of the Scriptures. They attack it with the weapons of argument also, and with a keen and hostile inspection, as well as with denunciation. They pursue it into its hidden places. They detect it under its hidden disguises. They reject all its excuses, all its flattering speeches, all its insinuating applications for a little forbearance, a little lenity. They are not satisfied, because they think and know, that God is not satisfied, until they see it dying and dead on the Cross. "If any man," says the Savior, "will come after me, let him deny himself, and *take up his cross daily, and follow me.*" Luke 9 : 23. The Apostle Paul says, referring to the trials he was called to endure, "*I die daily.*"

3.—The term crucifixion implies *suffering*. The crucifixion of our inward nature cannot take place without the experience of suffering. The suffering,

which we experience, is mental, and is analogous to that, which we experience at any and all times, when our desires are crossed and disappointed. It is the pain or suffering of ceasing to be what we have been by nature, and what by nature we have loved to be. A desire, a love, a passion, disappointed of its object, is always a sufferer. Such is the natural law in the case. And the intensity of the pain will be in proportion to the intensity of the passion. If we loved the world with but little strength, if we were bound to it but by slight adhesion, the process, which sunders this attachment, and disappoints this love, would give but slight pain. But bound as we are in fact with a tie which reaches forth from the heart to its object with the first moment of life, and which grows stronger and stronger with every pulsation, until it embodies, if we may so express it, the whole strength of the soul, the pain of separation, which corresponds to the strength of the previous attachment, is keen and intense indeed. The suffering of a parent, who sees all his attachments and hopes expiring in the death of a beloved child, are not keener. Hence in experiencing the new inward life, we are said to be crucified to that which went before ; not only because we die to it, but because in dying to it we suffer.

4.—But the pain of inward crucifixion, although it is probably the circumstance which in part has given origin to the name, is a different thing from the crucifixion itself. What, then, is it to be inwardly crucified ? To be inwardly crucified is to be dead to every desire,

whatever it may be, which has not the divine sanction ; to be dead to every appetite and every affection, which is not in accordance with the divine law ; to have no desire, no purpose, no aim but such as comes by divine inspiration or is attended with the divine approbation. To be inwardly crucified, is to cease to love Mammon in order that we may love God, to have no eye for the world's possessions, no ear for the world's applause, no tongue for the world's envious or useless conversation, no terror for the world's opposition. To be inwardly crucified is to be, among the things of this world, "a pilgrim and a stranger" ; separate from what is evil, sympathizing with what is good, but never with idolatrous attachment ; seeing God in all things and all things in God ; having God for our friend and heaven for our country. To be inwardly crucified, in the language of Tauler, "is to cease entirely from the life of self, to abandon equally what we see and what we possess, our power, our knowledge, and our affections ; so that the soul in regard to any action originating in itself is without life, without action, and without power, and receives its life, its action, and its power from God alone." *

5.—We have already, without referring to the subject by name, in part explained what is to be understood by inward crucifixion in the remarks, which have been made upon the suppression of the inordinate exer-

* *Choix d'Ouvrages Mystiques, Institutions de Frere Jean Tauler.* Ch. 12.

cises of the appetites and affections. Such appetites and affections, without being extinguished, are reduced to their true position ; and are no longer the recipients of any life or any law but what comes from God. But this is not all ; nor is it a principal part of what is implied in it. The process of inward crucifixion destroys and removes many other evils, to which our nature is exposed. Without going into a full detail of them, we may be allowed to say, among other things that it implies the destruction and removal of that feeling of SELF-CONFIDENCE, which is so natural to the heart that is not fully the Lord's. Least of all things does the man, who has undergone the process of inward crucifixion, place a high estimate, a self-confident estimate, on his own strength, his own perseverance, his own wisdom. Every feeling of that kind, which once characterized his proud nature, has passed away. So much so, that, so far from cherishing them, even the recollection of them is painful.

6.—The truly crucified man, like the truly humble man, does not desire great or eminent things for himself ; but deeply sensible of his unworthiness and dependence, it is entirely natural to him, in his new state of feeling, to seek, and to take the lowest place. In other words, as one of the results of his being crucified with Christ, he is dead to the perception and the pursuit of worldly honors. If, however, God should see fit, in his providence, to call him to a conspicuous and important station in the world, as he did anciently some of his pious servants, the fact of inward crucifixion

would leave him no choice but the divine choice, no will but the divine will. He is entirely acquiescent, and not only acquiescent but rejoices alike in what God gives, and in what he takes away; because he esteems all things which he has, whether it be more or less, whether it be regarded by the world as honor or dishonor, in the light of a gift from God, and looks upon it as valuable only as it is subservient to God's glory.

7.—It is implied in what has just been said, that the inwardly crucified man is not troubled and disquieted at those unavoidable imperfections which exist in his own person and mind. It is very true, that he sometimes mourns over them, as the indications and the sad results of our fallen condition, but so far as they cannot be corrected, so far as they are really unavoidable, he submits to them, however painful they may be, as facts and incidents in his condition and being, which originate in the wise dispensations of an unsearchable Providence. It is true, he is thus cut off from many ways or forms of usefulness; but, though afflicted, he does not allow himself to be disquieted. He is aided in thus maintaining himself in interior rest, by the important consideration that God, when he sends intellectual or bodily imperfections and weaknesses, and thus renders a person apparently useless, can avail himself of other instrumentalities and operate in other ways.

8.—The inwardly crucified man receives with entire acquiescence and peace of spirit all adverse occurrences of whatever nature, the misrepresentations and rebukes of his fellow-men, the various injuries of body and

estate, the disappointments of broken friendship and violated faith, the natural and unavoidable disruptions of social and family ties, and whatever other forms of human affliction exist. Whatever comes upon him, he feels that he deserves it. He opens not his mouth, except to praise the hand that is laid upon him. Satan, it is true, avails himself of the trials of his situation, and tempts him to evil thoughts ; but he is enabled with divine assistance to resist them and to triumph over them. It seems to him a light thing to suffer any thing which God sees fit to impose. It is true, that the trials which he endures sometimes occasion sorrow and even deep sorrow ; but it is a sorrow which is consistent with reconciliation to his lot and even happiness ; a sorrow without repining, grief without bitterness.

9.—Again, those, who are the subjects of inward crucifixion, do not seek, and do not value inward consolations in themselves considered. “It is written,” says the Savior, “*man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*” Consolation is the attendant of religion, but it is not religion itself. Religion, in its highest sense, implies an entire union with the will of God. The true food of our souls is God’s commandment, which is only another name for God’s will. A desire of any thing, and complacency in any thing, which does not place God’s will first, is infidelity to God’s claims. Holy joy is not a thing, which comes by volition ; but by a necessary law. If our hearts are right with God, such joy will always come in its appropriate place ; not because it is

called or willed, but because it cannot help coming. It is a thing which flows from holiness as from its natural fountain. The truly crucified man, therefore, is right in seeking the fountain first. Holiness is something which must be desired and sought *for itself*; something, which must stand, independently of its pleasant results, first in the mind's eye, first in the heart's affections.

10.—But perhaps the most decisive mark of the truly crucified man is, that he is crucified even to holiness itself. That is to say, he desires God only, seeks God only, is satisfied and can be satisfied with God only, in distinction from those truly spiritual gifts or graces, which God by his Holy Spirit imparts to the soul. The truly devout man, for instance, exercises penitence, submission, gratitude, forgiveness, and other christian graces on their appropriate occasions ; and he has great reason to be thankful to God that he is enabled to do it. But if in some moment of inward forgetfulness, of religious “irrecollection,” if we may so term it, he turns the thoughts and the interests of his heart from God to the graces which God gives, and begins to take complacency in his religious exercises, and to be happy in his holiness and to love his holiness, instead of a fixed and exclusive love for the Author of his holiness, I think we may confidently say, he is no longer a man dead to self, no longer in the proper sense of the terms a man inwardly crucified. “The purer our gifts are,” says Fenelon, “the more jealous God is of our appropriating or directing them to ourselves. The most eminent graces are the most deadly poisons, if we rest

in them and regard them with complacency. It is the sin of the fallen angels. They only turned to themselves, and regarded their state with complacency. At that instant they fell from heaven, and became the enemies of God."

11.—Inward crucifixion, when considered in particular instances, is the same thing as taking up the Cross; and if the Scriptures require us *to take up the Cross daily*, as every reader of the Bible knows that they do, then inward crucifixion becomes our DAILY BREAD. I think it may be said with entire truth, (indeed the scripture command implies it,) that not a day passes, which does not furnish occasion for the fulfilment of the scripture requisition. Crosses, planted by the hand of a wise providence, meet us at every step. And we are not at liberty to avoid them. We cannot avoid them without turning aside from God himself. And accordingly, in the spirit of a heart crucified, we must always stoop to the burden, which they impose upon us and must take them on our shoulders, and must bear them as humbly, as willingly, and as rejoicingly as Christ bore his. And happy is the soul, that knows from his own inward experience, that a sanctified Cross is a storehouse of spiritual blessings.

12.—Inward crucifixion, when carried, as it always ought to be, to its full extent, is the result of strong faith. It is hardly necessary to make remarks in support of this proposition. Who would relinquish the world, with the attractions the world holds out, be they more or less, if he had not faith in something better

than the world? Who, that is destitute of faith, can find in himself or elsewhere the power which is requisite to keep the various propensities and passions in their place, and in their right action moment by moment? Where will the man, that is without faith, find resources to sustain himself, against the trial of heavy temptations, without a fear or a murmur arising from the workings of a selfish nature? Who can walk in God's way and will, deprived by his special providence of all inward consolations, without faith? How can a man have his soul so fixed upon God as not to look with a self-interested complacency even on his spiritual gifts and graces, without the supports of a strong faith? We need not delay upon this matter. It is exceedingly obvious, we think, and the concession is confirmed by the experience and testimony of all devout christians, that without faith the results, which are involved in inward crucifixion, cannot be realized.

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

RELATION OF FAITH TO MEEKNESS OR QUIETNESS OF SPIRIT

Meekness or quietness of spirit illustrated in scripture history. Reference to the Savior. The state of spiritual quietness characterized by inward harmony. Practical results. This state very different from that of natural inactivity or sluggishness. Founded in faith. Inconsistent with fanaticism. Favorable to prayer. A good test of character.

IN attempting to give some account of the influences of faith on man's inward nature, we cannot well forget, that one of its most marked and pleasant results is the grace of a meek and quiet spirit. That state of mind, which the Apostle Peter describes as an ornament, which is "not corruptible," and which in the sight of God is "of great price."

2.—Of the grace of inward quietness, as of other christian graces, we find some striking illustrations in the scriptures, particularly in the characters and lives of Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Daniel, the Apostle John; and more than all, and above all, in the character and the life, in the labors and the trials of Jesus Christ. It is this trait of the Savior's character, which seems to

be particularly indicated in the prophetic passage in Isaiah, where it is said of him, "He shall not strive, nor cry ; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets." And still more strikingly, where it is said ; "he was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth."

3.—The opposite of true meekness of spirit, which is only another name for true quietness of spirit, is *impatience* ; sometimes showing itself in undeliberate and unprayerful haste ; sometimes in uneasiness and fretfulness in connection with many events which occur ; and sometimes in a disposition severely and unjustly to judge and denounce others. We find no evidence in the life of the Savior, of any thing of this kind. He saw the very evils, both physical and moral, which we now behold ; and he saw them, those at least which were of a moral nature, under still more aggravated circumstances ; the oppressions of the rich, the degradation and the crimes of the poor ; the violence of human passion resulting in personal contests and in national devastations, suspicion, hatred, envy, licentiousness, injustice and irreligion in its various forms of selfishness, unbelief, and open blasphemy. But he was not impatient ; he was not fretful. He could not behold these things with indifference, it is true ; he saw more clearly, than any mere man possibly could see, the extent of the evil which they involved ; but the strong disapprobation which he both felt and expressed and the deep sorrow which he could not but experience, were never at variance with the grace of a meek and quiet

spirit. We leave to the recollection of the reader the many facts and statements which support what has been said, with the exception of a single incident. On a certain occasion, as he was going through the country of the Samaritans in his way to the city of Jerusalem, he was unkindly and inhospitably treated by the people of one of the Samaritan villages. Some of his disciples, under the excitement and impetuosity of feeling, which such an event was naturally calculated to produce, proposed to him, that he should "command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did." But he did no such thing. He could be patient, and could exercise a christian sympathy and pity, even when he thought it necessary to disapprove and condemn. And that his people in all ages of the world might know, that a wrong done is sometimes not more criminal than the spirit in which it is met by those who have witnessed it, he seems to have thought it more necessary to rebuke his disciples, than to make the Samaritans themselves the subject of his reproof. He turned to his disciples, and in words of great moral and religious significance, "*rebuked them and said, ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.*"

4.—It would be interesting perhaps to enter into a particular analysis of the mental state, to which our attention is directed in these remarks. But without attempting to do this, we may properly add here, that the state of mind, which is described as meekness or quietness of spirit, is characterized, in a very high degree, by inward harmony. When the judgment is

rendered clear by religious influences, when the appetites are subdued, when the various propensities and affections, once rebellious and conflicting, are each and all in their place, operating where they ought to operate and not operating where they ought not to operate, the mind not only presents the aspect of rest or quietness but is obviously in harmony with itself; without which, indeed, the state of rest could not exist. The love of God is restored to its position, as the supreme, the controlling principle; and every natural desire and affection is exercised in subordination to it. There is not that inward jarring, which had formerly existed, thought in conflict with thought, passion contending with passion, and conscience asserting rights which it could not maintain. "Disorderly passions," says Mr. Henry in his interesting Discourse on Meekness and Quietness of Spirit, "are like stormy winds in the soul; they toss and hurry it, and often strand or upset it. They move it, '*as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind;*' it is the Prophet's comparison, and is an apt emblem of a man in passion. Now MEEKNESS restrains these winds, says to them, PEACE, BE STILL, and so preserves a calm in the soul and makes it conformable to Him, who has the winds in his hand, and is herein to be praised, that even the stormy winds fulfil his word." *

5.—It is hardly necessary to speak of the results of quietness of spirit, in relation to the various outward

* A Discourse on Meekness and Quietness of Spirit, by Rev. Matthew Henry, New York Ed. p. 34.

trials, to which all persons are subject in the present life. The very term itself implies, that these trials shall be met, not only without a murmur, but with entire acquiescence and even cheerfulness. "Fret not thyself," says the Scripture, "because of evil doers." If moral evils exist in the world to a very great extent, as they obviously do, if sin abounds in various forms, oftentimes undisguised and shameless in its affrontery, if christians are less decided and less watchful against it than they ought to be, it will still remain true, both now and in all time to come, that this state of things, trying as it is to a truly devout heart, will be more likely to be corrected by the efforts of a meek and resigned, than by those of a fretful and rebellious state of soul. The person of a meek spirit understands this ; and he cannot allow the sins, which he witnesses, to produce in his own mind a state of feeling, which would be prejudicial to himself without being beneficial to others. And we ought to add, that he does not limit himself, and that he ought not to limit himself, in the exercise of this christian grace, to the occasions which others furnish. It is true, that we are required, and are required too for good and urgent reasons, to guard against a fretful temper in relation to the vices and faults of others ; but it is also important, perhaps we may say equally important, to guard against a fretful and impatient temper, originating in the painful experience of our own defects of character. We should always remember, that fretfulness is not penitence ; and has in fact but very little relation to it.

That impatient and murmuring sorrow, which fretfulness always implies, sad and melancholy although it may be, is obviously a very different thing from that resigned and humbled sorrow, which constitutes the efficacy and the beauty of a truly penitential state of mind. Fretfulness, therefore, under all circumstances, only tends to increase and aggravate the amount of evil. It is in accordance with these views, that we find a practical religious direction in the writings of Mr. Fletcher of Madely, a man of great religious experience. "When your mind hath been drawn aside," he says, "DO NOT FRET, or let yourself go down the stream of nature, as if it were in vain to attempt to swim against it; but confess your fault, and calmly resume your former endeavor, but with more humility and watchfulness." *

6.—We should hardly do justice to our thoughts on this subject, if we did not add the remark, that quietness of spirit is sometimes disturbed by our desires and efforts to do good. The danger from this source is undoubtedly less imminent than that from some other sources. It is true, however, that it really exists. Truly pious persons sometimes defeat their own object and do considerable injury by permitting the suggestions of grace to be controlled by the unbelieving zeal of nature, instead of being chastened and regulated by the oversight of *grace added to grace*.

7.—We admit that from time to time we meet with

* Benson's Life of Fletcher, p. 100.

something, which looks like quietness of spirit, with something which is a semblance of it ; which, nevertheless, has no foundation in the true and sanctified adjustment of the inward state. The inactivity of nature, to which we have reference in making this remark, is a very different thing, both in its origin and its manifestations, from the calm rest of grace. Natural quietude is the result of darkness ; spiritual quietude is the child of light. The one does nothing, because it is too indolent and too selfish to do any thing, and its rest, therefore, bears the fatal mark of being a rest in its own will. The other, which does nothing in its own choice, does all things in God's will, so that its rest is in God and not in itself. The one is the rest of a man, who, unconscious of his danger, is walking blindfolded on the brink of a precipice. The other is the conscious rest of a glorified spirit, who walks in peace, and with open vision, on the golden pavements of the New Jerusalem.

8.—The basis of this remarkable and interesting state of mind is FAITH. In the first place, it is faith, *operating by love*. That is to say, a faith in the character of God, which results in the restoration of love to God. Those, who believe God, love God ; those, who believe him much, love him much ; those, who believe perfectly, love perfectly. The sequence of love to faith, both in fact and degree, is not a mere matter of arbitrary choice or volition ; but may rather be regarded as the result of a permanent and unchangeable law · a law which is true now and true always. which exists

on earth and exists every where else. And we may add, that those, who love God as they ought to love him, cannot love other things otherwise than they ought to. The love of God in the heart, existing in accordance with the commandment, viz. thou shalt love the Lord thy God *with all thy heart*, cannot fail to bring every desire, every affection, which has relation either to ourselves or to others, into subjection. Every desire, every affection, every tendency of our nature which is susceptible of a moral character, resumes, from that memorable moment, its true position. And when order is thus restored to the mind, by the reduction of every thing to its proper place, quietness of spirit exists and prevails as a necessary result. It is true it is no common love, which can effect this; and consequently it is no common degree of faith which gives rise to such love. But a grace so eminent as that of true quietness of spirit cannot be expected to exist where faith is weak.

9.—In the second place, the grace of quietness of spirit is sustained by faith in God's providences; or perhaps we should say more specifically, by faith in God's presence in his providences. We have already had occasion to refer to this great practical doctrine, that, in the succession of God's providences, God himself is hidden in the bosom of every event. He is there, although he is not always seen. He is there to watch and control, if he is not there to originate. So that we can truly say, that no event in his providence happens, without bringing God with it,

and without laying his hand upon us. The man of faith, therefore, knows, (and he cannot know it without bringing it home to his own case,) that he, who is impatient with events, is impatient with God ; he who frets at events frets at God ; he, who is not acquiescent in events, is at war with God. In such a position he cannot, he dare not place himself.

10.—Again, the grace of quietness of spirit is sustained by faith in God's promises. The man of true faith is very far from considering the afflictions of God's people the same thing with their being cast off and rejected. On the contrary, relying on God's promises, he has not a doubt, that their trial will in due season be changed into redemption, and their mourning into victory. Abraham had his long day of trial ; but his hopes deferred were ultimately satisfied and made rich in the gift of Isaac, "the son of promise." The patriarch Joseph endured the severe trial of his faith in exile and imprisonments and in false accusations ; but at length, in the language of the author of the Mute Christian, "he changed his iron fetters into chains of gold, his rags into royal robes, his stocks into a chariot, his prison into a palace." David also was afflicted in his youth ; but was victorious in age. He, who dwelt in caverns and made his pillow upon a rock, was at last seated upon the throne of Israel. Once the humble keeper of his father's sheep, and known only in the solitudes of his native vallies, he became, in God's time, the shepherd and ruler of a mighty people ; great in his renown, great in his achievements, and greater still

in being able to bear testimony to the favor and faithfulness of God. The man of faith understands this. He knows it all. It is written in letters uneffaceable on the centre of his heart. And is it strange, therefore, marking as he does the bow of promise in the dark cloud that overhangs him, that he should be resigned and quiet in spirit? "The steps of a good man," says the Psalmist, "are ordered by the Lord; and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand."

11.—We remark further, that this grace is sustained by faith in God's commands; that is to say, by a belief, that they are true, that they are reasonable, that they ought to be obeyed, and that they cannot be disobeyed without danger. The man of true faith and strong faith feels, that the command, FRET NOT THYSELF, and others like them are as binding upon us, as any other commands which are admitted to be of the most solemn and imperative nature. Immense is the error and the evil, which has arisen from man's attempting to make distinctions, where they ought not to be made. The sin of an unquiet or fretful spirit is not the same, it is true, with other sins; but the obligation, which attends the command not to indulge in such a sin, is the same. No man can knowingly violate such an obligation, although it relates to a matter which the world is very apt to designate as of small consequence, without showing that his heart is not right with God. Wherever God's command is, no matter how small the

thing is to which the command relates, obedience must follow. Otherwise sin lies at the door. The man of faith, deeply realizing this, feels himself bound by that sacred and paramount obligation which God's command always carries with it, to guard against the least impatience, the least unquietness of spirit. Bound by the command, supported by the promise, with his heart filled with love, and added to all this, meeting God as it were face to face in his providences, he understands the import of those delightful expressions; "They, that trust in the Lord, shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth, even forever." Ps. 125: 1, 2.

12.—In connection with this subject, and as naturally flowing from it, we have one or two remarks further to make. And one is, that the life of faith in the soul is very distinct and very remote, although it is not always thought to be so, from any wrongly excited and fanatical tendencies of mind. Fanaticism is characterized, among other things which help to define it, by being out of repose, by being restless, excitable, visionary, and denunciatory. The fanatic, while he may have some true elements of religion at the bottom, is one, who in many respects is wanting in harmony both with man, with God, and with the universe. Granting that he has a disposition to do good, it is still true, that he aims, although perhaps he is not distinctly conscious of it, to do God's work in man's hasty and selfish

temper. He cannot bear patiently with a fallen brother; he devises means for the renovation of the world, which are inconsistent with the laws of nature and the ordinances of providence; he is in too much of a hurry for God himself; and rushing thoughtlessly, but still as he thinks with a very good heart, against the demonstrations of God's wisdom and divine arrangements, he is perplexed, confounded, and dishonored. It must be very obvious, that the quietness of spirit, upon which we have been remarking, and which is the result of the highest exercises of faith, is a state of mind very different from this.

13.—We would observe again, in view of this subject, that quietness of spirit is especially favorable, and to some extent it is indispensable to a state of prayer. Prayer is not a demand, but a request, a petition; it is essential, therefore, to its very nature, that it should recognize the divine supremacy. He, who prays aright, always and necessarily says, *THY WILL BE DONE*. Who would presume to approach the throne of God, and to offer up his requests there, without feeling and without expressing the feeling, that God's will should rule? And yet it is very obvious, that the man, who is discontented and rebellious in spirit, just so far as he is so, fails in this important and indispensable feeling. When people lament, as they often do and as they often have occasion to do, that their prayers are so ineffacious, would it not be well for them to inquire whether they have that resigned, peaceable, and acquiescent spirit in view of God's character and dealings, which is so indis-

pensable to the state of acceptable prayer? Some persons, who creditably sustain their claims to the character of christians in many respects, fail here. They are willing to speak openly and freely for God on appropriate occasions; they sustain their professions and declarations by their contributions and alms; they would not hesitate a moment to undergo bonds and imprisonments in support of the truth; and at the same time, with an inconsistency almost unaccountable, they often, very often, exhibit a clouded brow and a restless, unquiet temper under those common dispensations, which characterize every day and every hour. The amount of this evil is incalculable. It is here, without looking further, that they may often find the worm in their bud of promise; the secret canker that consumes their flower of hope.

14.—Another remark, which we may properly make, is this. In the christian grace which we have been considering, we find one of the most decisive and most satisfactory tests of religious character. True religion is a thing, not fragmentary but continuous, not coming and going at separated and distant intervals, but existing always, moment by moment. It is obvious, therefore, that we need a test of religious character which is perpetual; one which is a permanent, ever living, and ever present expression of what exists within. Quietness of spirit, which shows itself so distinctly in the countenance and the outward manner, and which adjusts itself in all its acts so beautifully to the relations and the reciprocal duties of man with man, furnishes

this test. Gratitude arises on the occasion of gratitude ; joy arises on the occasion of joy ; sorrow arises on the occasion of sorrow ; and those occasions may be more or less frequent. But there is no day, no hour, no moment, which may not be said to be the occasion for the proper exercise of a meek and quiet spirit. And this arises from the fact, which is so obvious as to be self-evident, that God's dispensations, spreading themselves over every successive moment of time, are perpetual, never ceasing. These dispensations, which always involve and express a portion of the divine will, obviously require, considered merely as expressions of the divine will, a corresponding state of mind, equally perpetuated from moment to moment, equally unceasing. And this state of mind, existing on the part of God's creatures, and corresponding to the momentary manifestations of his will, is, and from the nature of the case, it must be, that of a meek and peaceable acquiescence. And accordingly those, who possess this trait, and who in possessing it show the heaven-born nature of their christianity, may be said in a special manner to obey the Savior's commandment, "LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE." It is a trait, when it exists in the highest degree, which sits so tranquilly and beautifully upon the outward manner, that it invariably attracts the attention of the beholder, and is truly the "ornament of great price," as the Apostle Peter denominates it ; something which can be seen of all men, at all times, and in all situations ; the perpetual light of the creature which corres-

ponds to God's perpetual light in his providences ;
 "the star that never sets."

15.—In bringing this subject to a close, we are willing to admit, that we have spoken in strong terms of this spiritual grace ; but not stronger, as it seems to us, than the Scriptures will warrant ; and not stronger, than are to be found in the writings of many devout and experienced persons. In the interesting little work, entitled the *Mute Christian*, to which we have already had occasion to refer, a work which from beginning to end may be regarded as an illustration and defence of the excellence of this christian grace, we find the following remarks. "A quiet, silent spirit is of great esteem with God. God sets the greatest value upon persons of a quiet spirit. A quiet spirit is a spark of the divine nature. It is a heaven-born spirit. No man is born with a holy silence in his heart, as he is born with a tongue in his mouth. This is a flower of Paradise ; it is a precious gem that God makes very great reckoning of. A quiet spirit speaks a man most like to God ; it capacitates a man for communion with God ; it renders a man most serviceable to God, and it obliges a man to most accurate walking with God. A meek and quiet spirit is an incorruptible ornament, much more valuable than Gold." *

* The *Mute Christian* by Rev. Thomas Brooks. Boston Ed. p. 97.

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH.

RELATION OF FAITH TO THE GRACE OF SILENCE.

Evils of an inordinate use of the tongue. Can be corrected by faith alone. Faith produces silence by freeing the mind from jealousy and suspicion. And also by placing objects in their true relations and assigning them their true value. Of faith in relation to private trials. Of faith in relation to public trials. Of faith in connection with controversies. Connection of the grace of silence with sanctification.

MANY things, which are good in themselves, become evil in their excess. This is especially true of the faculty of speech, one of the most valuable gifts, which our heavenly Father has seen fit to impart to us. The tongue, which is described by an inspired Apostle as an "unruly member," is ever in action ; but not always in profitable action. Statements are made thoughtlessly and often maliciously ; which, if they are susceptible of increase in the first instance, are magnified by repetition. Thus the first exaggerated statement soon becomes positive falsehood. And the falsehood, which at first was modest and mitigated in its manner, becomes bold, noisy, and intense.

2.—Moralists have been in some degree awake to this evil state of things. And they have done well in suggesting powerful motives, drawn chiefly from its pernicious effects, for its counteraction. But there is only one thing, as it seems to us, which holds out any encouraging prospect of effectually eradicating this “root of evil.” And that is faith in God. And we think that we do not ascribe too much to faith, in saying that it is able to do it. Inordinate speech like every thing else has its cause. It is the result of something, which is antecedent, and which lays deeper in our nature. Faith operates upon the consequent by first operating upon the antecedent; it takes away the fact of inordinate conversation by first taking away the desire of it; and establishes outward silence on the basis of inward repose.

3.—In the first place, true faith in God has a tendency to prevent the existence of jealous and suspicious states of mind. As the soul, in the case of those who have such faith, has ceased to place dependence upon men, it has no motive for attaching that importance, which it might otherwise do, to an unfavorable word or look. Being strong in its position, it can afford to put a favorable construction upon such words and actions, or at least to wait for further developments. It is easy to see, therefore, that the man of strong faith would be easy and silent under such circumstances, while the man without faith or with but little faith, yielding as he naturally would to jealousy and suspicion, would be strongly tempted to set loose the “unruly member.”

4.—We may say further in general terms, **that** strong faith in its results tends to promote the grace **of** silence, by placing objects in their true position, and **by** assigning them their true value. To the natural mind all those things, which have a special relation to self, appear distorted and exaggerated. Indeed all things, whether they have a particular relation to self or not, inasmuch as they are perceived out of their true relations, are perceived incorrectly. The ordinary events and occurrences of life, as they are viewed in reference to this life alone, are too much magnified in importance. They expand themselves, in the mind's eye, out of all just limits. Faith, on the contrary, views them in the light of eternity, which brings them to their true size. Events, therefore, which leave the man of faith in quietness of spirit, disturb and agitate the natural man, unloose the tongue of suspicion and complaint, and fill the world with his outcries. In the storm on the lake of Galilee, Christ was asleep in the vessel, while every thing around was filled with confusion and clamor. His disciples awoke him with the request, that he would interfere in their behalf. His reply was ; “Why are ye fearful, OH, YE OF LITTLE FAITH ? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea ; and there was a great calm.” Mat. 8 : 26.

5.—True faith is naturally followed by silence in regard to those trials and those interests, which are of a private and personal nature. It is so for the important reason, which has just been mentioned, namely, that it places objects in their true relation and assigns them

their true value. And it is so for other reasons, which might be mentioned. When we are tempted and afflicted, it is natural for us to look for assistance and consolation somewhere. We are so constituted that we cannot well avoid it. And in the defect of faith, which attaches us to that which is unseen and spiritual, we turn and rest upon that, which is seen and sensible. We fill the ears of our families; and not contented with this, but looking every where for help except to Him who alone can give aid, we extend the voice of our complaints to every one, who is willing to hear. But it is very different with the person, who has faith; especially if it exists in a high degree. He has but little to say to men in his trials. He as naturally and confidently goes to his heavenly Father, as the child, in its season of affliction goes to its earthly parent.

6.—Strong faith has the tendency to remove undue fears and anxieties, in relation to existing public evils. The man of strong faith does all that he can to remove such evils, and to prevent the extension of their results; but having done this, he is willing to leave every thing calmly and patiently in the hands of God. His soul is at rest in the consciousness of having done his duty. He remains silent in the Lord. But the anxieties of the man, who is weak in faith, never end. He is looking, first, in one direction and then in another, addressing one with denunciations and appealing to another's sympathy, making a world of trouble by the constant use of his tongue, without effecting his ultimate object and probably with injury to it. His tongue does not

rest, because his heart does not rest. And his heart does not rest, because he has little or no faith. And the movement of the tongue, founded upon the sin of a too weak faith, is necessarily unsalutary. In relation, therefore, to existing public evils, strong faith, having first led persons to do all their duty, leaves them in a state of patient and quiet waiting upon God. "*I waited patiently for the Lord,*" says the Psalmist, "*and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.*" Ps. 40: 1.

7.—Inordinate speech, the utterance of the wrong thing or in the wrong spirit, is one of the evils of controversy. Even religious men, as the history of theological controversies evidently shows, are not exempt from it. Faith enables us to give the calm and peaceful answer, which, as it has the power to correct the judgment as well as the spirit or temper, is likely to be the correct answer. We would not have it understood, that the person, who has faith, is indifferent to his opinions; but merely, that having faith he is in that state of mind, which enables him to reply calmly, cheerfully, and thoughtfully. "He has confidence in the truth, because he has confidence in God. 'GOD IS TRUE;' and being what he is, God can have no fellowship with that which is the opposite of the truth. He knows, that, if his own sentiments are not correct, they will pass away in due time; because every thing, which is false, necessarily carries in itself the element of its own destruction. He knows too, that, if the sentiments of his adversaries are false, they bear no stamp of durability. God is arrayed against them, and they must sooner or

later fall. Hence it is, that his strong faith in God, and in the truth of which God is the protector, kills the eagerness of nature. He is calm amid opposition; patient under rebuke." *

8.—But the man, who has faith in God, has confidence in the power of love, as well as in the power of the **truth**. And indeed they are closely related. True love is love without selfishness, which is always a love according to the truth. Such love will win its way against every sort of argument, which is not founded in the truth. Nothing has such efficacy in weakening prejudice, in soothing passion, and in bringing the mind of an opponent, in every respect, into a right position. If we had nothing but nature for a teacher, we could not fail to learn the lesson, that there is nothing so efficacious as the spirit of love in correcting the perversions of prejudice, and in prostrating the falsehoods of passion. But when we know from the Scriptures, that "God is love," those who are like him can never distrust themselves in being what he is. And accordingly in a multitude of cases, holy love, having faith in God as its source, and having faith in itself as that which God will approve, will be silent, while the weakness and irritation of an unsanctified nature will fill the air with its clamors.

9.—We are aware, that this subject may appear of small importance in the eyes of some persons. They do not clearly perceive the connection between the use

* Interior Life, 2d. Ed. p. 338.

of the tongue and the sanctification of the heart. Their want of perception does not alter the fact. They never will know, they never can know the blessedness of purity of heart in connection with a speech unsanctified. It is impossible that the two should go together. It is as true now as it was in the times of the Savior, that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." If the tongue is unregulated, the heart is unregulated also. Nor is it less true now than it was then, that "*every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.*" If we really have faith in this declaration of the Savior, it will necessarily have an effect upon us. And the converse of this statement is true. We may lay it down as truth, that the man, who is not careful in his words, is a man wanting in faith; or at least, is a man of weak faith. It was the natural result of the faith of the Psalmist, that he was enabled to say, not merely that it was his delight to do God's will, but still more specifically, "*I said I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue. I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.*" Ps. 39: 1.

10.—The Rev. William Law, author of the *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, and other religious works, makes the following remarks in a letter to one of his correspondents.—"The SPIRITUAL LIFE is nothing else but the working of the Spirit of God within us; and therefore our own silence must be a great part of our preparation for it; and much speaking, or a delight in it, will be often no small hindrance of that good,

which we can only have from hearing what the Spirit of God speaketh within us. This is not enough known by religious persons. They rejoice in kindling a fire of their own, and delight too much in hearing their own voice, and so lose that inward unction from above, which alone can new-create their hearts. To speak with the tongues of men or angels on religious matters, is a much less thing, than to know how to stay the mind upon God, and abide with him in the closet of our hearts, observing, loving, adoring, and obeying his holy will."

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

RELATION OF FAITH TO ENERGY OF ACTION.

Faith favorable to right action. This view sustained by a reference to the results of natural faith. Of religious faith in distinction from natural. It has resources of its own. Faith in the promises imparts energy to action. Faith favorable to energy of action, because it is favorable to rectitude of purpose. Practical illustrations of the subject. Differences between natural energy and christian energy.

It is not unfrequently objected to the doctrine of living by faith, even by those who admit its wonderful power in inward crucifixion and in producing inward silence, that it is unfavorable to energy of outward action. The objection is sometimes carried so far, in the controversies which have taken place on the relative position and importance of faith and works in the christian life, as to imply, that it is even unfavorable, not only to energy of action, but to any action whatever. And I suppose it may be very properly admitted, that faith, taking deep root in the heart, is not favorable to hasty and unpremeditated action ; is not favorable to impetuous and violent action ; is not favorable to un-

principled and unjust action ; is not favorable to anxious, distrustful, and troubled action ; but at the same time it cannot be said with any good reason, that it is unfavorable, in any of its bearings, to *right action*. The contrary is the fact. Assuming, therefore, that, in speaking of action, we mean such action as God approves, or right action, we cannot doubt that faith in the heart is favorable to an energetic course of conduct.

2.—And in support of this opinion, we remark in the first place, that this view is sustained by the analogy of natural faith ; that is to say, by the corresponding law and facts in natural faith. It is hardly necessary to say here, after what has already been said in another place, that men are strong naturally, other things being equal, in proportion to their natural faith. It would be difficult to point out any arduous enterprize among men, which has been brought to a favorable issue, without some degree of confidence or faith ; faith in the rectitude of their principles, faith in their personal resources, faith in the practicability of their object. It is faith, which enables them to lay their plans, to surmount opposition, to triumph over difficulties. Multitudes of facts and illustrations, if it were necessary, might be adduced in support of this view. And on the other hand, it is equally obvious, whenever we carefully notice the conduct of men around us, that, as soon as faith fails, energetic action fails. The want of natural confidence is attended by the want of natural energy. This is the general and almost invariable result.—It is

the same in religious things, as in natural things. Religious faith gives birth to religious action ; that is to say, to those kinds or forms of action which depend on religious principles ; and the energy of the action corresponds to the degree of the faith. So that the relation between the degree of action and the degree of faith seems to be an universal law.

3.—But we remark again, that religious faith has sources of support of its own ; sources of energetic action which are peculiar to itself. “WE BELIEVE,” says the Apostle Paul, “AND THEREFORE WE SPEAK.” Faith always has its object. And the inquiry naturally presents itself, what was it, which the Apostle Paul believed, that thus opened his heart of love, and his lips of eloquence, and sent him forth a preacher through the world ? He believed in God’s moral government ; he believed in God’s commands ; he believed in the immortality of the soul ; he believed in man’s fallen and depraved condition ; he believed in the advent of Jesus Christ, in his crucifixion, and in his sacrifice for sin ; he believed in the presence and power of the Holy Ghost ; he believed in the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, and the retributions of eternity. Having faith, as he did, in these great truths, truths sublime in themselves and deeply operative and renovating in their application, he found a motive, an impulse to the highest action, which he could find no where else. It was religious truth, the truth *believed in* and the truth *felt*, which was the inspiration of his life of labor ; “*while we look,*” he says, “*not at the things which are*

*seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the things, which are seen, are temporal ; but the things, which are not seen are eternal.”**

4.—But besides the great truths to which we have referred, we are not to forget that there are the Promises, to which the faith of every christian attaches itself ; and which in this way become a source of energetic action. But this is a topic, as we may reasonably suppose, which is too familiar to the christian mind to require comment. The strength, derived from the promises, is the theme of every devout tongue. The promises support the poor in their poverty, the sick in their sickness, the tempted in the season of their temptation. It is faith in the promises, (we do not say exclusively but certainly in a very high degree,) which erects churches, and which sustains from age to age religious ordinances. It is faith in the promises, which applies the waters of baptism, and which breaks the bread of the sacrament. It is faith in the promises, which supports both the private christian and the minister of the Gospel in their arduous labors for the good and the salvation of their fellow-men. It was faith in the promises, which gave encouragement and support to the labors of Brainerd in the wilderness and of Harlan Page in the city ; and which at the present day sustains the hearts of missionaries from various denominations of Christians, on the frozen shores of Greenland and on the burning sands of Africa. Suited to every

* 2d. Cor. Ch. 4: 13.

situation and to every duty, they are the support alike of him who suffers and of him who acts; and their beneficent influence is as diffusive as the occasions both of action and suffering. "*Exceeding great and precious promises are given to us,*" says the Apostle Peter, "*that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption of the world through lust.*"

5.—Again, the principle of faith has a tendency to establish us in rectitude; and a conviction of being in the right always and necessarily gives strength. Those, who are in the exercise of full religious faith, are "*co-workers with God.*" God is their guide. They enter into all his plans, all his purposes. And, although they may not see the end from the beginning, although they may not understand in all respects the way in which they are led, they know that he, who leads them, cannot and will not lead them to do that which is morally wrong. The knowledge, that we are wrong, makes us weak. Every wicked man knows it to be so. The conviction, that we are right, gives us strength; as every upright, every truly holy man can abundantly testify. They, who live by faith, live with God; under God's eye, and in the enjoyment of his favor. Just so far as they thus live, they feel themselves to be right. And we repeat, that right now, and right always, more than any thing else, is the source of unconquerable power. And consequently in all the varieties of their conduct, whether they are called upon to endure or to act, to do great things or small, they are not subject to those

misgivings and perplexities of purpose, which attend those who feel that the course they take is of doubtful rectitude.

6.—It is hardly necessary to delay for the purpose of citing particular instances to show, that faith gives energy. The Bible is full of such instances. The history of the church, in all ages of the world, is full of them. Of the long record of those, who have lived and died in the faith, who have believed in God as *their* God, there has not been one who has been a sluggard; not one who has lived or has wished to live in the indulgences of the victory without being willing to endure the perils of the conflict. It seems to us impossible that it should ever be so. What does a life of faith imply? What relations does it establish? It implies evidently, not only that we believe in God in the more general sense of the terms; but believe that God is *our* God. It establishes us in the delightful relation of sons and daughters; and in the full belief of this relation. And it is a matter self-evident, that no one can believe this, who does not seriously and sincerely give himself to God, to act for God with all his powers of action whenever and wherever God calls him to action.

7.—And accordingly we ought to remember that the life of faith calls us to that action and that suffering, which the will of God imposes, and not always and not necessarily to that action or that suffering, which attracts the notice and admiration of men. The man of true energy does the thing, be it more or less, be it this or that, which the will of God requires him to do. The

beggar, who strolls from door to door, and who solicits and receives his scanty pittance from those he meets, may really exhibit an energy of purpose, unknown and unhonored though he may be, which in other situations would lead to admiration and fame. The poor man, who from the situation in which God has placed him, is obliged to spend his time in the discharge of some menial office, as he repeats from dawning day till setting sun the ceaseless round of his labors, may exhibit an energy of purpose as real and as great, as that which has characterized the most devoted missionaries in heathen lands. And though no human eye may regard him, no human tongue may applaud him, he may be as acceptable in the sight of God. The man in the ordinary situations of life, with neither poverty on the one hand nor riches on the other, but who as a man and a citizen, as the head of a family and as a member of the church, is called upon, every hour, to respond to some new claim of trial or of duty, and who in meeting these claims is summoned continually to the exercise of reason, of faith, and of patience, may really possess and exhibit all those requisites of character, which in other situations would have made him a Paul or an Apollos, a Howard or a Schwartz. We do not mean to say, that faith makes noisy men; it does not undertake to furnish every man with the requisites of speech and of action which are adapted to the Forum or the Senate; it does not make men, who will act without occasion of action, or who will act in discordance with the occasion; but makes men who will do what God calls them to do,

promptly, faithfully, and unremittingly. And such are not mere semblances or effigies, but men of energy in the true sense of the terms.

8.—We ought perhaps to say, in bringing this subject to a conclusion, that a distinction may very properly be made, in a number of particulars, between natural energy and christian energy. Natural energy, being based upon natural principles, partakes of the nature of the principles from which it springs. Christian energy, being based upon christian principles, partakes of the nature of its heavenly origin. And accordingly natural energy is, in many cases, the result of passion; christian energy is the result of calm reflection. Natural energy conforms to things, as they are viewed in the natural light, and is therefore variable. Christian energy conforms to things as they are viewed in the divine light, and is therefore invariable. The energy of nature is sometimes cruel and malignant; the energy which springs from union with Christ, is always conscientiously and strictly just, and is never unkind. The one is energy for the creature; the other is energy for God. The one moves in the track indicated by human reason; the other moves in the mysterious but sure line of God's providences. The one is founded on the shifting sands, on the "hay and stubble" of man's fallen nature; the other is founded on the rock, which no storms can wash away, the ROCK OF AGES.

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH.

ON THE RELATION BETWEEN QUIETNESS OF SPIRIT AND ENERGY OF ACTION.

Of a feeling of distrust, which exists in relation to quietness of spirit. Quietness of spirit, when properly understood, entirely consistent with true energy of action. Quietness, when resulting from christian principle, necessarily involves energy. The doctrine, that quietness of spirit is consistent with energy of conduct, illustrated by personal and historical facts. References to Columbus, Washington, Howard, Wesley, Penn, and others. Evidence of its truth from the Scriptures.

ONE of the most interesting results of true faith, as we have had occasion to see in a former chapter, is meekness or quietness of spirit. It must be acknowledged, however, that there exists, to some extent, a secret feeling of distrust in relation to this trait of mind. A feeling which is probably somewhat enhanced by the tendency of the age, in which we live, to constant, vigorous, and almost turbulent movement. The precise shape of the feeling of distrust, to which we have reference, seems to be indicated by the proposition, in which it is usually embodied, namely, that meek-

ness or quietness of spirit is inconsistent with an adequate degree of energy of action.

2.—In the last chapter we have seen, that faith embodies in itself elements, which lead to a course of action, such as may properly be regarded as truly energetic. The man of true faith acts, and *must* act, as God would have him act. God's action, as a result to be brought out in its appropriate time, is necessarily embodied in God's faith; the action which God requires in the faith which God gives. At the same time we feel justified in taking the position, that energy of action is entirely consistent with quietness of spirit. We wish it to be remembered, however, that in speaking of quietness of spirit, we mean that quietness and that only, of which faith is the foundation. The meek and quiet temper of mind, which is founded upon religious faith, is a very different thing from that mere inertness or stupidity of mind, which is sometimes found to exist in connection with physical and even moral causes. We wish it to be remembered also, that energy of action is not necessarily the same thing with violence of action. The violent and the energetic man are often confounded together; but in truth are quite distinct. The truly strong or energetic man is a strong man generally, as well as specifically; he is a strong man in all points; he has an internal foundation of strength, which gives strength to every thing. The violent man, on the contrary, is strong in some things, and weak in others; and the consequence is, that strength in a certain direction, being unrestrained and uncontrolled by strength in

another direction, naturally becomes violence. So that violence is not strength, in the proper sense of the terms ; is not *true* strength, *true* energy ; but may be regarded as strength unregulated, strength in convulsion, strength in a state of disease ; which in reality is weakness, and oftentimes very marked and deplorable weakness.

3.—Keeping these preliminary remarks in mind, particularly the remark, that true quietness of spirit has its foundation in faith, we proceed to say, that quietness of spirit is not inconsistent with energy of action. On the contrary, we cannot hesitate to say, that the truth in this matter is found in nearly the reverse of this proposition. The fact is, that quietness of spirit is not only consistent with energy of action, but is favorable to it. And we may go further and say, that the highest energy of action cannot exist without quietness of spirit.

4.—We take the ground then, in the first place, that a truly meek and subdued temper of mind is consistent with energy of action, because this state of mind itself implies the existence of a secret or hidden energy. It is obvious, that there can be no true and abiding quietness of spirit without entire *self-control*. But such self-control, which is one of the highest results of moral and religious discipline, implies the existence of a high degree of inward power. Quietness of spirit, therefore, when it results from christian principle, is really a great exhibition of inward energy ; an energy which is not obtrusive, and which may even be said to hide it-

self, but which really exists. The man, who is meek and quiet in spirit, because he has power by divine grace to command his spirit, is really a strong man. And the strength, which is exhibited in securing inward subjection, will exhibit itself on other occasions when they arise. The man, who can control his own spirit, is in the most favorable position, other things being equal, to regulate, modify, and control the spirits of other men. He is precisely the man, from whom great active or practical results may reasonably be expected.

5.—A multitude of instances, those of every day's occurrence as well as those which are historical, go to confirm what has been said. And they confirm it in the natural life, as well as in the religious life. Among those, who have not experienced the renovating grace of God, or who have experienced it but in a very limited degree, the truly strong men are generally men, who maintain a subdued and quiet self-control. Faith, even if it be nothing more than natural faith, makes them strong; and strength makes them quiet and calm; and their calmness is both the incident and the proof of their strength. And much more is this the case, when religious faith is added to that which is natural. Mark the men in common life, the farmer, the mechanic, the day-laborer; and those who in their toils and their poverty are tried also in the furnace of affliction; and you will find true strength, only where you find a mind that is deliberate and calm. Observe the men, who are truly distinguished in courts of justice and in halls of legislation; and they will be found, with

scarcely an exception, to be men that are deliberate, thoughtful, and calmly unimpassioned, except on those rare occasions, when the manifestation of strong emotions may become a duty.

6.—On certain occasions, not long since, I was favored with the opportunity of being present at the forensic efforts of a distinguished lawyer and statesman. I think on all these occasions, there was no one trait in his own character and action, which added more to the moral influence of his arguments, than the calm and dignified, the patient and self-possessed control of his own spirit. As, in the exercise of his great logical mastery, he forged together link after link and chain after chain, in his massive and impregnable argument, I could hardly decide in my own mind, whether those, who heard him, were most affected and wrought upon by the great beauty and strength of the work, or by the deliberative, self-controlled and passionless mind of the agent. I do not mean to say, that passion was not there ; but only that it was not visible. “Its hour had not yet come.” But when, in any given part of the argument, the duty of the intellect was discharged, and the time came for the utterance of feeling ; when the moment arrived, in which the demonstrations of logic, which placed the wrong-doer in his appropriate light, should be followed up by emotion, the moment of solemn reproof and just denunciation, then the same self-collected and inward mastery, the same measured enunciation, deliberate, self-possessed, deep-toned, as if unmoved justice ought still to hold the reins, gave tenfold

energy to the burning words, which proclaimed the feelings of the heart. Uttered emphatically and strongly, it is true, but still appropriately and calmly, with strength of manner, but still with entire quietness of manner, they seemed to come from a mind above ordinary human minds, and to be terribly sublime and just, as if they had come from God himself, who judges and denounces justly, because he judges and denounces without any disturbing passion.

7.—History furnishes numerous illustrations. Christopher Columbus, if we have a right understanding of his personal character, was a man of a self-controlled and quiet spirit. The foundation of this subdued and immoveable calmness of spirit, which supported him under immense labors, deprivations, and sufferings, was faith, undoubtedly. And it is very possible, that it was, to a considerable degree at least, *natural* faith. That is to say, he had faith in his mathematical and geographical deductions; he had faith in his personal skill as a navigator; he had faith in his own physical and intellectual resources; he had faith in his personal influence over minds of less power; he had faith in his integrity of purpose. He felt, therefore, that he stood on a strong foundation; and this inward conviction, strengthened perhaps in some degree by religious sentiments, imparted both inwardly and outwardly that self-possessed and delightful calmness of spirit and manner, which is one of the surest indices of true greatness. No one will say, that Christopher Columbus was a man wanting in energy

8.—George Washington is another instance. Washington was a man of few words, of deliberate movement, of passions subdued and kept firmly under control ; but when he had once ascertained the course which truth and duty required him to pursue in a given case, he went calmly forward in its execution, with a fixedness and almost immutability of purpose, which, without being hasty or violent, constituted the highest energy. Saying nothing of the religious element, which we have no doubt existed in him strongly, he had faith in the justice of his cause ; faith in himself ; faith in the commanders and soldiers by whom he was surrounded ; and faith in the general sentiment of the people, whom he represented. Standing on this strong basis, which was furnished in a considerable degree even by natural faith, he combined the greatest inflexibility and strength of purpose and action with the greatest calmness and dignity. Numerous other instances, in which we must suppose that natural faith chiefly predominated, such as that of Socrates, of Cincinnatus, of Aristides, Gustavus Vasa, Wellington, and many others in all the leading situations of life, illustrate this general view ; and go to confirm the statement, that a self-possessed and quiet manner, a manner which may be said to conceal the mighty power which lies beneath it, is entirely consistent with the greatest energy of action.

9.—Instances of this kind illustrate this subject on natural, as much or more, than on religious principles. The men of the world understand it. In great emergencies they consider it indispensable to obtain leaders

that are self-controlled. It is sometimes the case, in the convulsions to which society is subject, that we hear among them the proposition and the demand for violent agitation ; but it is worthy of notice, that they always regard it as a necessary preliminary of success, that he, who takes the lead in this agitation, the man, who agitates others, must himself be *above* agitation. They know well, that it is exceedingly dangerous to raise the civil and political elements, without a power in the leading agent to regulate and control them. They know too, that the highest kind of power, that alone which is adequate to such an emergency, is found in those only who can perfectly control themselves.

10.—We proceed to remark further, that the religiously strong men, as well as the naturally strong men, in all ages of the world, and in a still higher degree, have been quiet men ; that is to say, have been men, who have been characterized in their lives and actions by a deliberate and meek spirit. Mr. Wesley, whom God in his providence raised up and constituted the head of a new and efficient ecclesiastical organization, was such a man. Called to act in a great variety of emergencies, to preach to the ignorant and the poor, to meet the learned in exciting controversies, to deal with men of all traits of disposition, to lay the foundation of a new and great religious movement, in the midst of labors, hazards, and perplexities, scarcely exceeded by those of the great Apostle himself, he was every where characterized by a subdued and thoughtful equanimity, which only added beauty to the vast energy of his purpose and action.

11.—Take again the case of a person, called to action under very different circumstances, that of the justly celebrated Howard, the distinguished philanthropist. A person, coming into the presence of that remarkable man, would hardly suppose that beneath that simple and childlike exterior, characterized by hardly less than woman's gentleness, there lodged a sacred *determination*, strong as if God himself were embodied in it, (as it seems to me that he was,) which led him forth from country to country, from prison to prison, amid exposure and fatigue, amid diversities of men, and varieties of climate, till he fell a glorious martyr to a purpose, which might fail of being accomplished, but in a heart like his could never be relinquished.

12.—The views which have been expressed, apply also, in a remarkable degree, to William Penn. Penn, whose name has acquired a great historical interest, was a truly meek, peaceable, quiet man. This would naturally be supposed from the nature of the mild and pacific principles, which his eloquent writings have illustrated. But he was not a weak man, he was not an undecided man, he was not an idle man. Far from it. His life was a life of exposure, of toil, of persecution, of suffering. The author of the "No Cross, No Crown," a work which bears evidence of being written from the impulses of his own heart, could not well be a man, who would shrink from suffering or grow weary in well-doing. The noble State of Pennsylvania, founded in principles which the world had never before seen reduced to practice, is a living and perpetual monument,

that meekness of temper is consistent with greatness of conception, and that quietness of spirit is not at variance with sublime energy of action.

13.—The laws of true religious experience are always the same ; and always productive of the same results. And if such are the results in the case of the Methodist and the Quaker, they will be found to be the same in the Catholic, the Episcopalian, and the Congregationalist. And we may add the names of Fenelon, Leighton, and Edwards to those of Penn and Wesley, (and we know not how many others of other denominations of christians,) as illustrative of a life of unceasing action, beautified by a divine serenity and tranquillity of spirit.

14.—But passing over many instances, in the history of the church and the world, of those who possessed religion and of those who did not possess it, or who possessed it in a much less degree, we proceed to say, that the strong men of the Scriptures were quiet men ; not inactive, but quiet ; men that had rest in God. Their minds were not agitated and vascillating ; as minds are apt to be which are not bound to God by the strong links of faith and love ; but were fixed to some great purpose. One of the most striking instances is that of Abraham. There is not a fact mentioned in relation to Abraham, not a circumstance described, which necessarily indicates any thing different from quietness of spirit. His soul, patient and self-possessed, had rest in God, because it had faith in God ; it was quiet in God, because it had confidence that God would

protect it. But who was more decided in action, who more energetic in the discharge of any duty to which his heavenly Father called him? Without speaking of Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Daniel, Paul, John, and others, men who embodied great strength of purpose in great humility and believing quietness of spirit, may we not, in this connection, mention without irreverence the blessed Savior himself. Certain it is, that the great purpose of his life, his indomitable will, was fixed immovably in one direction—unchangeable as the throne of God. That will never altered. From that purpose he never changed. And yet he always exhibited the meekness, the simplicity, the gentleness of a little child.

15.—Such instances seem to us to establish our position. Quiet men, other things being equal, are the truly strong men. Especially is this true of those, whose equanimity or rest of spirit is founded in religious faith. Strong faith makes strong action; but it is action without noise, without violence, without inconsistencies. So far from a quiet and self-possessed spirit being unfavorable to energy of action, we do not hesitate to say, that those persons are unfitted for great enterprises requiring energy of action, who are destitute of this trait. The true element of power is either wanting in such men, or is rendered unavailable by not being kept in its right position.

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH.

ON THE RELATION OF FAITH TO THE DISCHARGE OF CIVIL AND POLITICAL DUTIES.

Christians may properly take a part in civil and political concerns. Of cooperation with political parties. Of the limitations to be observed in the application of the principles which are proposed. Of the utility of a religious conservative body in the state. Application of the principles laid down to other cases.

THE element of a living faith in the soul adapts itself to every situation. Wonderful alike by its fruitfulness and its flexibility, it furnishes principles of action applicable to all varieties of human conduct, inspiring the duties which we owe to ourselves, to God, and to our fellow men. It has a practical relation, therefore, to civil and political duties, as well as others. It is especially a matter of interesting inquiry, in the present disturbed and conflicting state of the world, to what extent and under what circumstances a person, who professes to live by faith in the Son of God, can properly engage in the discussions and strifes of party politics. Some are of opinion, that such persons ought to

take no part whatever in political concerns ; and that such a participation, even in the smallest degree, is inconsistent with that entire separation from the world which they have professed. From this extreme opinion, however, we think it the part of truth and wisdom to dissent. We are clearly taught in the Scriptures, that governments, sustained by human agency, and designed to operate upon men, are approved, and are required by the Supreme being. Man, by becoming a Christian, does not cease to be a man ; and while, by becoming a Christian, he takes a higher position, and assumes a higher class of duties, he is not at liberty, on that account, to vacate, and to dispense with the duties which belong to him as a man and a citizen. Every man, therefore, is bound to sustain government by personally obeying the laws, by aiding in elevating suitable persons to office, and by countenancing and aiding the proper authorities in the exercise of their legitimate functions. As far as this, every thing seems to be clear. No man will be less religious, less holy, less the subject of a triumphant faith, in consequence of discharging civil and political duties to the extent which has been specified. But it is obvious that this view of the subject does not meet all the inquiries, which naturally arise in relation to it.

2.—The truly difficult question is this, Can a man, who is wholly consecrated to God, and who lives by faith, consistently with such a state of mind, unite himself to a political party, and pledge himself, as a member of the party, to party discipline and party mea-

tures ? To this question, as thus stated, we can have no hesitation in answering in the negative.

We observe in the first place, that in republics, and also in constitutional monarchies, we may reasonably expect, if we are permitted to reason from the past, that there will always be political parties. It is proper for us, as men and as citizens, and not inconsistent with our duty as christians, to become acquainted with the principles or doctrines of such parties. And we may also, in accordance with the views which we entertain of party doctrines and principles, very properly give the preference to one party over another. But this does not, by any means, make us a party man, in the ordinary and the censurable sense of the expression. The preference which we give is only a general preference, founded on general views. But the obligations of a holy life extend not only to general views and general acts, but to particular views and particular acts, and to all acts, of any and every kind. A party may be right in its general doctrines and practices, and yet be wrong, very wrong, in particular acts. A man, who, in the exercise of faith, walks daily in the light of God's divine direction, can never knowingly follow his party to the adoption of any wrong measure ; and therefore cannot, in the strict sense of the terms, be considered a party man. In a multitude of cases he is obliged, on the principles of rectitude, to dissent from the particular acts and practices of his party, although he prefers its general principles and doctrines above those of any other party. As the doctrine of faith requires

him to seek the divine direction in every act, and always to be guided by the Holy Spirit, he may follow his party just so far as they go right, but can never follow them, nor approve them when they go wrong.

3.—But this is not all. It is very desirable, that those, who are aiming at a holy life, should stand aloof from the tactics of party, and whatever constitutes the machinery of party movement. In all ordinary cases it is undoubtedly true, if we wish to accomplish a good end, we may rightly employ all proper means which are subordinate to that end. To abandon the means is, in fact, to abandon the end. But in party tactics and movements, there is generally so strong a bias of self-interest, so much of the busy littleness of human calculation, and so little of broad and generous confidence in God's providential government, that the man, whose heart is wedded to the Divine Mind, cannot safely or consistently have any thing to do with them. If, therefore, with a view to the accomplishment of the general object, he acts with the party, it must be on the principles of individual movement and responsibility, and not under the pressure of party discipline, and as an irresponsible portion of the organized machinery of political tactics. The general object he has in view may be the same with that of a particular party; but he cannot stoop to any means, which do not commend themselves to the spirit of perfect rectitude, and upon which he cannot ask the divine blessing. Sustained by faith in God, who is the ruler of nations as well as of individuals, he sees no necessity of taking such a

course, independently of its inherent viciousness. A holy person, therefore, although he may sometimes act politically with some party in preference to another, is not properly a party man, and cannot be considered as such.

4.—A person, who enjoys, or who wishes to enjoy, the life of faith in God, should avoid all political reading, which is of a mere party character. We do not say *all* political reading, which in many cases would be wrong, but all that political reading which is of *a mere party character*; that is to say, which regards the obligations of party, rather than the interests of truth. Such reading is so full of unjust suspicion and recrimination, in a word, is generally so false as well as violent, that no man, who is true to the claims of holiness, can take any pleasure in it. It is not only in the highest degree unprofitable, but it is positively evil in its effects. It is calculated, in particular, to produce an agitated and restless state of mind, exceedingly adverse to calm reflection, as well as interior peace.

Besides this, a person is liable, by such reading, to become entangled in prejudices, in party interests, in the variety of partial and secular feelings, which so extensively and injuriously prevail. In other words, he exposes himself to the dreadful temptation of getting aside from the true centre, which is God, and of being drawn into the absorbing and destructive vortex of the world. With all such reading, therefore, he is bound, as a man that walks with God, to have as little to do as possible.

5.—But the inquiry will perhaps be made here, Can a person be so useful, politically and as a citizen, who takes this course, as he would otherwise be? To this question we cannot hesitate to answer in the affirmative. History shows us, that in republics, and in constitutional governments of whatever kind, parties are in general very nearly equally balanced. The violence of their antagonistical struggles, also, and the moral recklessness of their strife, when any question of great moment is at issue, are found to be nearly in proportion to the equality of their strength. At such a crisis, when the very foundations of the commonwealth are shaken, how desirable, how necessary is the presence and influence of a conservative body of men, who, in their freedom from passion, can estimate the just claims of truth, and, in the strength of moral and religious principle, will, at all hazards, do what is right. Hence it has generally been found in this country, that, when great constitutional and moral questions have been at stake, the results have been favorable to law and truth, in consequence of the accession, at the precise moment of danger, of those of all denominations of persons, who, in their devotion to rectitude of principle, have declined to recognize the coercions of party discipline. Such persons constitute, if we may be allowed an historical allusion, the genuine "Imperial Guard," the true "Macedonian Phalanx," who, unwilling to expend their efforts unnecessarily, strike only at the moment of imminent hazard, and whose moral strength renders them invincible. Is it not usefulness and honor enough

to do what God would have us do, and to do it when he would have us do it? Can there be any thing more beneficial or more glorious than to stand, under God's orders, in the position of perfect readiness, to wait patiently in the exercise of faith for the elevation of the great Commander's standard, and to move, only at the bidding of His unerring providence? So far, therefore, from being useless, a religious conservative body, not nominally, but really such, not banded together by regulations of human devising, but watchful for the openings of Divine Providence, and guided by the teachings of the Holy Spirit, is the true salt of the land, and is necessary for the salvation of the Republic.

6.—The principles, which have been brought forward at this time, are applicable in many other cases, which have some analogy to political strifes. Contentions often arise, for various causes, in families and neighborhoods, which result in the formation of parties. Let those, who profess holiness to the Lord, have nothing to do with the partizan movements and measures which spring from such unhappy divisions. They are very likely to be stained and polluted with the same narrow views, with the same prejudices and passions, which characterize party contentions on a large scale. We do not mean to say, however, that we are at liberty to be indifferent to them. Far from it. Our meaning is, that we should keep our minds free from the entanglements of party influence, and, irrespective of existing excitements and personal recriminations, do whatever God in his providence would have us do, and do it in

him, and for him alone. "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?"* There is no strife of neighborhoods, no agitation of communities, no convulsion of empires, to which God is indifferent. He, who notices the fall of a sparrow, cannot fail to notice the fall and rise of men, the overthrow and restoration of nations. God will not relinquish the government of the world, because "the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing," because "the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together." And he, who would cast the branch of healing into the waters of disease, he, who would reform men either politically or socially, must have faith in God as the great reformatory power, and must act in cooperation with the divine wisdom and agency, rather than in connection with movements suggested in human ignorance and by human passion.

* Amos 6: 3.

CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH.

ON THE RELATION OF FAITH TO RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY.

General remarks on the contests of religious sects. Such contests result not from religion, but rather from the want of it. Comparison of those, who are weak in faith, with those who are strong in faith. Results in the two cases. Of some favorable signs of the present period. These views consistent with a proper regard for the truth. Of national dissensions and contests.

THERE is probably no reading, which gives more pain to the truly benevolent and christian mind than that, which has relation to religious controversy ; the humiliating story of the alienations, the mutual attacks and persecutions of religious sects. Men, to whom a candid judgment cannot well refuse the attributes of sincerity and piety, have regarded each other with a degree of distrust and jealousy, which it would be difficult to explain consistently with the principles and claims of religion. If this state of things had ended in distrust, it would have been more tolerable ; but it proceeds oftentimes from distrust to hatred, from want of sympathy to positive and aggressive alienation ; and does

not terminate, till it leads its victim to the rack, the prison, and the place of execution.

2.—We have already had occasion to refer to this subject in a preceding chapter ; but it is one of so much importance, that it seems to require a more specific notice. We are aware that the state of things, to which we have referred, has sometimes been ascribed to the christian religion. And we are willing to concede to those, who make this unfavorable suggestion, that a man who is entirely destitute of religion, cannot be expected to contend for religion. To him it is a matter of great indifference, whether the cause of Christ rises or falls, whether error is prostrated or is triumphant. But place religion in the heart, and though it be but the beginning of religion, the “ grain of mustard seed,” it is a necessary result, that this indifference will be changed into watchfulness and solicitude. The person, who is the subject of christian grace, though in a small degree, knows the difference between religion and irreligion ; between a regard to God’s glory and neglect of it ; and between the important results, to which they respectively give rise. To be indifferent, therefore, is impossible. But it does not follow, and it ought not to follow, that, because he ceases to be indifferent, he must, therefore, be distrustful, passionate, and cruel. Such a conclusion would be an instance of what logicians call the *FALLICIA ACCIDENTIS* too gross to impose upon any mind, that is capable of perceiving the relations of ideas. We entirely discard the inference that these things are the result of religion. It

is true, they are incidentally connected with religion, but are not its *results*. Strictly and truly, they are the results of that, still remaining in the heart, which is *not religion*. They are the results of those parts of man's nature, which religion has not yet been able to overcome and subdue. So that the difficulty is not with his religion ; but with the small degree of it.

3.—And accordingly we proceed to say, that the spirit of controversy will cease in proportion as holiness advances ; not because there will be less love for the truth, but because there will be more faith in God. The man of a small degree of faith loves the church undoubtedly and the interests of the church ; but he fears that it will one day fall under the attacks of its adversaries. The man of strong faith loves the church ; but he believes that the church is safe, because God is its protector. The man of little faith loves the truth, but he is jealous and pained at every variation from it ; the man of strong faith loves the truth equally well, but having confidence in the power of the truth to make its own cause good, he has less anxiety, while he has equal affliction. The man of little faith is a fearful and to some extent a selfish man ; and these mental traits naturally react upon and exaggerate his distrust of others. The man of strong faith is necessarily courageous and generous, and has every disposition, therefore, to give even his enemies what is justly their due. The man of little faith, not being able to see far, resorts to what is visible and tangible, to human instrumentality mingled

up, as it generally is, with human passion. The man of strong faith, relies with confidence upon what is unseen ; and conscientiously rejects all movement, all instrumentality, which has not God for its author.

4.—The results are obvious. History has declared them. On the one hand, we see distrust, jealousy, evil surmise, evil speaking, persecution, imprisonment, and death. The earth has been covered with christian blood shed by the hands of christians, simply because they have not been such christians as they should have been, but were men of little faith. It was not because they had religion, but because they had not enough of religion ; not because they had faith, but because they wanted more faith. On the other hand, strong faith, by a natural and unalterable law, gives origin to strong love ; that love which, in the language of the Apostle, “suffereth long and is kind, envieth not, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” Such faith, resulting in such love, does not give rise to contention, but terminates it. It hushes the voice of suspicion and unkindness ; it breaks the chain of the prisoner, and quenches the fire of the stake.

5.—The time has arrived in God’s providence, when good men, in the increase of their faith, begin to see the propriety of imitating the example of the Savior, and of sitting down, in the spirit of benevolence and sympathy, even with the “publican and the sinner.” Not on the ground of a common character, but on the ground of a common humanity ; not because the sin is

not hateful, but because the sinner is an object worthy to be saved. The experiment has been tried of making christians by separating christianity from humanity, by means of argument embittered with contempt, by denunciation, by fines, by imprisonment, and by torture ; it has been tried by those who were oftentimes very sincere undoubtedly ; but it has failed as it ought to fail, and as it always will fail. A new era, characterized by a higher confidence in God, has opened upon the world. It is incipient, but it has come. We see but the faint glimmer of the dawn ; but it is rapidly increasing to noon-day effulgence. The unbeliever and the christian can live under the shield of the same civil constitution, can recognize in each other the rights of conscience, can walk in the same road, can labor in the same field, can sit at the same table, and can sympathize and aid in their common trials and duties. And we cannot hesitate for a moment to say, that the spirit of forbearance and love, which is beginning to characterize the present age of the world will present in behalf of christianity its most triumphant argument, and will win more extensive and more glorious trophies to the cross of Christ, than have honored any previous period.

6.—We would not have it understood, as we suppose it cannot be understood, that we regard it unimportant to maintain and defend the truth. Far from it. The doctrine of faith does not require this. Belief can never rest upon negations ; it always has an object ; it always implies something believed in. And it is no

discredit to any man or any body of men to assert candidly and frankly what it is which they believe. It is their duty to do it. But what we mean to say, is, that the truth itself rejects all defences and supports which are not made in a *true* spirit. It does not need, and it cannot accept any such aid. Every thing, which is not done deliberately, justly, and benevolently, is done *falsely*. Any thing and every thing in human action, which is not prompted by the principle of love and is not regulated by right, embodies a falsehood. It is not, strictly speaking, a natural falsehood, but it is a moral falsehood. It is not a falsehood in mathematics, but it is a falsehood in life. It has that in it, which is inconsistent with the nature and order of things. And therefore, having the element of death in itself, it communicates disease and death to every thing it touches. There can be no greater or more injurious error than to suppose that the truth requires or desires to be sustained by a false spirit. Love the truth, maintain the truth, propagate it; but *not at the expense of the truth itself*, not at the expense of the best and truest elements of man's nature, not at the expense of honor, of christianity, and of everlasting life. The truth has power; but it is the truth, when sustained and announced by a *true spirit*, which has the *highest* power, the power to overcome all its enemies. It is the truth thus announced and thus supported, which shall harmonize every discordant interest, which shall bring to the true standard every erring intellect, which shall demol-

ish every idol temple and make every hill and valley vocal with the Savior's name.

7.—The principles, which are involved in these remarks, apply to other forms of distrust and contention. All jealousy, all contention, all strife both of individuals and nations will cease, whenever and wherever men have full faith in God. "It is better to trust in the Lord," says the Psalmist, "than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes. The Lord is on my side; I will not fear what man can do unto me?"* When nations have faith, that is to say, when the great mass of the people which compose nations, have faith, such faith as the Gospel of God contemplates, but which has been as yet realized only in part, then wars will cease. "Vengeance is *mine*; I will repay, saith the Lord." The nation that has so much faith in God, as to proclaim itself governed by the principles of justice, of forbearance, forgiveness, and good will, and which, in accordance with this announcement, shall cease to place its chief confidence in battlements and armies, will find itself stronger in the panoply of peace, than other nations are in the munitions of war. It will be surrounded by a wall, not made of iron or brass, but stronger than either; which swords cannot pierce and balls cannot batter down; the mighty rampart of a world's admiration and affection. More than all, it will be surrounded by that invisible and protecting arm, mighty though

* Ps. 118: 6, 8, 9.

unseen, which always follows in the line of God's promises. "Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink."* "Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them, which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven."†

CHAPTER NINETEENTH.

ON THE RELATION OF FAITH TO THE PROPRIETY AND PERFECTION OF OUTWARD MANNER.

Introduction of the subject. Remarks on the true basis of propriety and politeness of manners. On the outward expression of the unpleasant and violent passions. On calmness of manner. On attention to others. On outward appearance and methods of expression. Extract from Dr. Miller.

As man is constituted of soul and body, it is but natural to expect that the inward principle will show itself in outward results. And, among other things, it will show itself very distinctly in the outward manner.

* Romans 12 : 19, 20.

† Mat. 5 : 44, 45.

And besides, man, by his very constitution, is a social being; and the relation of sociality which he sustains to others, imparts to the matter of good breeding or propriety of manners, the nature of an imperative duty.

2.—What ought to be and what is, the outward manner of a truly devout and holy person in the intercourse of life? Does the life of faith require him to be rude and severe in his manner? Does it require, or even permit him to violate any of the principles of good breeding? Or does it, on the other hand, tend to perfect the outward bearing, and to render one, in the highest degree, a pattern of truly good breeding and of good manners, in the situation in which Providence has placed him?

3.—In connection with this subject, which is certainly important enough to receive a share of the attention of those who aim at doing the best things in the best way, we remark, in the first place, that the basis of true propriety and politeness of manners, will be found to consist in genuine benevolence of heart. A man of a morose and overbearing, or a contracted and selfish temper, will find it very difficult to conform to the requisitions of a just and well ordered social intercourse. A truly religious person, therefore, one whose heart in being sustained by faith is filled with sincere good will and love to his fellow men, possesses the great prerequisite of propriety and perfection of manners. In doing what the intercourse of improved society requires, he does not act the hypocrite, which is too often

the case with those who have a reputation for politeness; but expresses, in his outward conduct, the genuine sentiments of a purified and philanthropic heart. He has, therefore, a decided advantage over other persons in this respect.

4.—It is one of the principles of a just and courteous social intercourse, that there shall be a suppression of the outward signs of the unpleasant and violent passions, such as disgust, jealousy, evil suspicions, and anger. It is true, the rules of good breeding and politeness, as they are understood and put in practice by the world, do not forbid the existence of such evil feelings and passions in the heart. That is a matter, of which they do not profess to take cognizance; and in regard to which they are undoubtedly very defective. But they forbid, in all ordinary cases, the outward manifestations of them, even in a small degree. The fulfilment of this important requisition in the doctrines of social intercourse, viz., the suppression of the outward manifestation of the unpleasant and evil passions, is very easy for a holy person, who, in the exercise of a purified love resting upon a strong faith, “thinketh no evil,” “hopeth all things,” “endureth all things.” He does naturally and easily, as well as from a sense of duty, what other persons do, in general, from constraint.

5.—Another principle is, that there should be a subdued and calm outward manner, in opposition to undue eagerness, activity, and vehemence. The manner of a truly polite or courteous person, in opposition to that

unsettled and eager activity which has just been mentioned, is subdued, deliberate, gentle. He is not suspicious of being slighted; he is not impatiently or unduly inquisitive; he has learnt the great lesson of self-control; he is not eager for the first word, or the first place, or the first mark of attention. He seems to have, if not a religious, a sort of *conventional* faith, that, if he will remain patient and tranquil, every thing will take place, both at the right time, and in the right degree and order. It may be added further, that the principle now under consideration condemns a boisterous mode of expression, frequent and loud laughter, a distorted or agitated countenance, and violent gesticulation. The state of mind existing in a truly religious person, is the precise state which is best calculated to enable one to fulfil these requisitions in the easiest and best manner. It is the nature of such a person to be patient and forbearing; to be serious, deliberate, and gentle.

6.—The man of truly good breeding is not *egotistical*; that is to say, he does not think much, or say much of himself. He speaks at the right time, but is seldom the hero of his own story. In his present situation, (that is to say, in the fulfilment of the duties of social intercourse,) his object, in part, is to put others at their ease, and to make them satisfied and happy. He must consent, therefore, to have self put out of the way. By the law of polite social intercourse, he is bound to think more of the happiness of others than of his own; and accordingly he is careful not to notice,

and if, under certain circumstances, he cannot well do this, he is careful not to bring unnecessarily to the notice of others, the small and perhaps unavoidable imperfections of those around him. On the contrary, in the spirit of self-forgetfulness, and of true benevolence towards others, he endeavors to bestow upon all who are present, those little acts of attention, and those various marks of recognition and kindness, which are calculated to make them pleased and cheerful, and which are appropriate to their situation. And we may remark here again, that he, who has a heart, of which faith is the inspiring principle, and which as the result of its faith is filled with love to God and love to man, is precisely in the situation, which renders the discharge of these offices pleasant and easy. And he is not only in this situation, but, in point of fact, a truly believing and devoted person almost necessarily acts in this way.

7.—A person of good breeding, when he is in the company of others, is always attentive to what is passing. It is but little short of insult to the company to let our minds be wandering abroad, when our bodies are present; and when our turn for speaking comes, to be obliged to say that “we did not hear,” or that “we do not remember what has been said.” Such carelessness is exceedingly rude, if it be exhibited in the presence of those, who are our superiors in age or in their condition of life; and it is unkind and ungenerous if it be exhibited to those, who are in a lower condition. A person, who lives by faith, is one who lives in present connection with God, and is therefore one, who “lives by

the moment." He knows that the facts and circumstances of each moment disclose a portion of the divine will, and may, therefore, have a near relation to his present duty. And, consequently, he cannot be inattentive. No matter what company he is in, he meets the creatures of God there ; and the sentiment of duty requires him to hear what is said and to notice what is done, in order that he himself may do what God would have him do, in his present circumstances, and that he may keep a " conscience void of offence."

8.—The rules of good breeding require that persons, in their intercourse in society, should pay some attention to their outward appearance and to their methods of expression. We do not say that they require that there should be sumptuousness, expensive and unnecessary outward display ; but they do require that there should be propriety and neatness. A man, who is entirely negligent and slatternly in his appearance, not only indicates the degradation of his own mind, but indirectly says to the company he is in, that he has no personal regard for them, that they are unworthy of his esteem. The same rules require also that a person should be attentive to his modes of expression. It has hardly escaped the notice of any one, that there are words and forms of expression current in some portions of society, which are stamped with vulgarity, and sometimes almost with impurity. And so marked is their character, that it is very seldom that we hear them uttered with deliberation and seriousness, but generally in a trivial and jesting way. All such words

and phrases are excluded from all truly correct and well established social intercourse. It is hardly necessary to say, that a life of faith, which is necessarily regulated by a regard to propriety and purity, is decidedly favorable to all that is implied and required in these statements.

9.—Without formally pursuing these inquiries further, we would remark here, that holiness, of heart and life, which always and necessarily has its foundations in faith, is thought by some, who have not looked deeply into its nature, to be inconsistent with those established forms and proprieties which have now been spoken of. And this opinion undoubtedly operates, in the minds of such persons, as an objection in the way of receiving the doctrines of holy living. But there could not well be a greater mistake than this. The existence of true holiness of heart will immediately impart to every one, who is the subject of it, a seriousness and modesty of demeanor, a propriety and justness of manners, combined with a sympathy in the happiness of others, which will commend itself at once to the best judges on this subject.

10.—I am aware that there are some who profess to be true saints, who are, nevertheless, very ungracious and unsaintlike in their manners. They seem to think, if one may be allowed to judge from their outward deportment, that inward purity has no established connection with external propriety; that holiness, when coming in contact with the weaknesses and sins of the world, under any circumstances, gives a license to

rudeness ; and that a person cannot be faithful to Christ without being more or less uncivil and even violent to his fellow men. But such mistakes and crudities grow out of the old stock of nature, and are not the product of the truly regenerated life. The world, which is condemned for sin, is not to be won back from its evil ways by the commission of sin, but by the power of holy love. Every thing has its place and its law. And God recognizes the great fact, that there is something due to man, *as man*, even though he be a *fallen* man ; and consequently that something is due to man, in his character of man, in the relations of social intercourse. When the persons, to whom we have just now referred, are further advanced in christian experience, and bear more of the image of Christ, they will find that “ godliness is profitable unto all things ;” that it meets all the demands of life ; and that it is especially suited to be the aid and ornament of social intercourse. Under its influence the rudeness of nature will be changed into the civility, which necessarily flows from true christian love. That eager vehemence, which results from a want of strong faith, will be changed into meekness and forbearance ; and tones of ill-considered and impatient rebuke, into the gentle accents of kindness ; not to mention other improvements, which will combine their influence in diffusing the perfection of the inward life over the outward character.

11.—In confirmation of the views of this chapter, which seem to us of much practical importance, we take the liberty to introduce an extract from the interesting

Work of Dr. Miller on Clerical Manners and Habits.—

“ By *good manners*, then, I beg you will understand me to mean, those manners which christian purity and benevolence recommend, and which, where those graces reign, they will ever be found substantially to produce. Dr. Witherspoon, in his ‘ Letters on Education,’ while strongly urging the utility and importance of polished manners, remarks, that ‘ true religion is not only consistent with, but necessary to, the perfection of true politeness ;’ and fortifies his opinion by ‘ a noble sentiment,’ as he calls it, of the Prince of Conti, viz. that ‘ worldly politeness is no more than an imitation or imperfect copy of christian charity, being the pretence, or outward appearance, of that deference to the judgment, and attention to the interest of others, which a true christian has as the rule of his life, and the disposition of his heart.’ And truly, we have only need to see an example of that unaffected kindness, affability, respectfulness, gentleness, and attention to the feelings and comfort of all around us, which real religion at once demands and inspires, united with the gravity, dignity, and prudence, becoming those who remember that for every word and action they must give an account ;— we have only, I say, to see this happy union of qualities fairly exemplified in human deportment, to be convinced that nothing can be more nobly beautiful or attractive, in the view of every thinking beholder, than the undissembled expression of pure christian feeling : and, of course, that to be an humble and assiduous imitator of Christ, is the shortest way for a minister of the Gos-

pel, or any other man, to exhibit the most perfect manners of which our nature is capable.

So much for the general principle. Cultivate the christian temper, and you will always, in precisely the same proportion, lay the best and the only true foundation for the manners which I recommend." *

CHAPTER TWENTIETH.

ON THE RELATION OF FAITH IN THE LORD TO REJOICING IN THE LORD.

Preliminary statements. Rejoicing in the Lord a scriptural state of mind. Distinction between rejoicing in the Lord and rejoicing in ourselves. Rejoicing in the Lord not at variance with prayer. Relation of faith to rejoicing in the Lord.

It is worthy of notice, that persons, as they advance in religious experience, gradually undergo a transition from a state of prayer to a state of praise. When, by passing through the death of nature, they have entered

* Letters on Clerical Manners and Habits by Samuel Miller D. D. Professor in Princeton Theological Seminary.

into the region of a truly regenerate life, and have experienced something of the higher results of sanctification, the state of mind is, for the most part, one of rejoicing; in accordance with the divine precept, "REJOICE EVER MORE." A song of divine jubilation, a hymn of inward triumph in the Lord, not wholly unlike that which we may suppose to ascend from the happy hearts of angels, is going up from the soul almost without cessation. This is a distinct and frequent modification of christian experience, when the experience, advancing beyond its more common forms, has reached a certain position in its triumphant progress.

2.—Persons, who are in this state of mind, are sometimes tempted and troubled in relation to it. They are not entirely confident, that such a state of constant rejoicing is consistent with a due sense of the woes and sins of men, and with those feelings of sympathy and mourning, which the condition of things around us is calculated to excite.

3.—We remark, in the first place, and as calculated in some degree to meet this difficulty, that rejoicing in the Lord is a *scriptural state of mind*. This would be a natural and obvious view of the subject, independently of the express declarations of Scripture. God is good as he is wise; and with all the wisdom and power which are requisite, he also has a disposition to do, at all times and in all things, that which is for the best. Both in himself and in all the modes and acts of his administration, he is infinitely just, merciful, and lovely. Praise, therefore, or what is the same thing, a reverential,

heartfelt rejoicing in Him, belongs to Him of right. And it belongs to Him at all times. If we had no express command to render it, we could not rightly withhold it. And besides this, the illustrations of rejoicing in the Lord, and the commands to rejoice in him, which are found in the Scriptures, are very numerous. "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous." "Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness."

4.—We would observe, in the second place, that the state of mind, upon which we are remarking, is not merely JOY, which may arise from various causes, and not always with profitable results, but *joy or rejoicing in the Lord*. This is an important distinction. It is not joy in ourselves, but joy in the Lord, of which we are speaking. It is God, in himself and in his various manifestations, who calls forth, without ceasing, this happy song of inward jubilation. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." And this is so strictly true, that the soul, when it is in this state, finds it difficult to turn itself away from God, by means of reflections on itself and its own happiness, or by directing itself to any other creature, except as God leads it there. God, the infinite mind, the all wise and beneficent creator and sustainer, is the one present and delightful object, which unites all its thoughts and absorbs all its affections.

5.—We observe again, that rejoicing in the Lord, or praise, is *not at variance with prayer*. On the contrary, we may regard it as one of the highest forms of

prayer; especially if we employ the term prayer, as is sometimes done, as a general name for all truly religious exercises. A portion of the Lord's prayer is expressive of the union of the human with the divine will. "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." No one will doubt, that the supplication, "thy will be done," when it is sincerely offered, is to be regarded as true prayer, whether we use the term in a broader or a more limited signification. Indeed, it is a prayer, which embraces all other prayer. When we pray for God's will to be accomplished, we pray for every thing which we ought to pray for. But we can have no hesitancy in asserting, that the purifying and ennobling feeling, expressed in this supplication, which casts out self, and makes us one with God, is the basis of all true rejoicing in the Lord. A person may rejoice in himself, or may be happy in himself, in various ways and for various reasons; but no one can *rejoice in the Lord*, who cannot sincerely and rejoicingly say, at the same time, "THY WILL BE DONE."

6.—Rejoicing in the Lord, as we have just had occasion to say, always involves the prayer, "thy will be done." But it involves more; and this additional part makes the difference between rejoicing in the Lord, and mere acquiescence in the will of the Lord. It involves a conviction, deep, heartfelt, and unchangeable, that the will of God, with the *exception of any thing and every thing which is sinful*, is now accomplished; that every moment brings with it the fulfilment of all things

up to that moment ; and that God is now, and will be for ever glorified in every thing that takes place.

7.—And it is at this point that we discover the *relation, which faith in the Lord holds to rejoicing in the Lord*. Reason tells us, that God's will, with the exception which has already been named, is accomplished in every thing which takes place. The opposite view would be inconsistent with God's supremacy. But reason, while it declares the thing, does not so clearly declare the *righteousness* of the *thing*. It establishes the mind in a fixed position, without relieving it from inward perplexity. But faith, reaching forth from the things which take place, to the multiplied relations which bind them to all other facts and things, which ever have taken place or ever will take place, to time past and time to come, to the law of God and its rewards and penalties, to God as love and God as justice, to heaven and hell, brings home to the mind the deep and irreversible conviction, that the will of God, which is accomplished moment by moment, is accomplished in **RIGHTEOUSNESS** ; and that it is, and ever will be, the occasion of holy rejoicing. Faith in the Lord, therefore, which connects the known with the unknown, is the true foundation of rejoicing in the Lord. Faith concentrates eternity in each moment as it passes, and regarding God in every event of that moment, pronounces him **RIGHTEOUS**. Even sin, which God can never approve, and which can never be said, in any proper sense of the terms, to be in accordance with his will, will be so overruled in his infinite wisdom, will be

so atoned for, through his infinite mercy, in the case of all those who repent, that the thing, which is most deformed and hideous of all things in itself, will be made to subserve the glory of God. Every where will it exhibit the inscription on its troubled and burning surface, an inscription which heaven and hell shall alike see, "The Lord is holy;" "The Lord is glorious in holiness."

8.—Take down, then, your harps from the willows. Rejoice in spirit, all who have taken the Lord for their portion. Amid all your sorrows, temptations, and trials, amid all the sins and the anguish of our fallen world, praise the Lord. Let the praise of the Lord be continually in your mouth. Think not that you must cease to praise in order to pray. Pray, but praise also. In a very important sense, PRAISE IS PRAYER. Praise is the highest prayer. Praise is the prayer of angels.

CHAPTER TWENTY FIRST.

ON THE RELATION OF FAITH TO THE FREEDOM AND ENLARGEMENT OF THE SOUL

Remarks on the fact of spiritual enlargement. Illustration of the statement from Madame Guyon. Of the nature of spiritual enlargement. Extract from Fenelon. Enlargement of spirit has its origin in faith.

"HE brought me forth into a LARGE PLACE," says the Psalmist, xviii. 18; "he delivered me, because he delighted in me." It is not uncommon to hear very

devoted christians speak of being in a "large place ;" of experiencing, at a particular time, a delightful freedom and enlargement of soul. And there is some reason for supposing, that every one, in the progress of his religious history, will at length find a cord broken ; (perhaps it may be in the triumphs of that victorious grace to which it would be presumption in man to set limits, "the last cord that bound him,") which will be followed by a consciousness of enlarged, expansive freedom, unknown before.

2.—Thus Madame Guyon, after having experienced severe inward trials, gives an account of her deliverance, and her subsequent state, in the following terms. "After I had come out of the trying condition I have spoken of, I found it had purified my soul, instead of blackening it, as I had feared. I possessed God after a manner so pure and so IMMENSE, as nothing else could equal. In regard to thoughts or desires, all was so clean, so naked, so lost in the divinity, that the soul *appeared* to have no selfish movement, however plausible or delicate ; both the powers of the mind, and the very senses being wonderfully purified. Sometimes I was surprised to find that I was destitute, so far as I could perceive, of any intellectual action. Every thing was calm and quiet within me. The imagination, formerly so restless, now no more troubled me. I had no more perplexity or uneasy reflections. The will, being perfectly dead to all its own tendencies, was become void of every human inclination, both natural and spiritual, and only inclined of God to whatever he pleased, and

in whatever manner he pleased. [That is to say, she could not of herself desire any natural gift or even any specific spiritual gift or exercise, independently of the will of God. The limitations of self seemed to be demolished ; and the soul went cheerfully out into the unbounded freeness of God's will.] This *vastitude* or *enlargedness*, which appears to be without limits, and is not bounded by any thing, increases every day ; so that my soul, in partaking of the qualities of her Spouse, seems also to partake of his *immensity*."—" I believe," she adds, " God was pleased to bless me with this experience at the beginning of the new life, to make me comprehend, in favor of other souls, this passage of the soul into God."

3.—We would remark here, that the enlargement of which we are speaking does not appear to be originally so much an intellectual enlargement, as a liberty and enlargement of the heart, of the affections. Whatever there is of intellectual enlargement, is founded upon an enlargement of the religious affections. The heart expanding expands the whole. The period, at which we experience that special and unlimited enlargement of soul, to which we especially refer, is when we fully cease from self ; in other words, when we cease from desires ; that is to say, from all natural desires which remain unsanctified, and which are of course selfish desires. All such desires, as they run in a particular direction, and are restricted by their appropriate laws, necessarily impose a limit upon the soul's action. They contract the soul to the limits of mere selfish humanity,

which sees but a little distance, and is shut up within the sphere of its own objects. And if we permit ourselves to be governed by such desires, as unsanctified men generally do, the soul of course is restricted and shackled by the law of their action; and although we often imagine ourselves to be possessed of great freedom at such times, yet in truth the soul cannot expand itself beyond the boundaries which they have set. Just so far as it is under the government of the natural desires, in distinction from the will of God, it feels itself to be a slave; and just so far it really is so.

4.—We proceed to say, further, that there may be an abandonment of the self-interested and unsanctified desires in part, and this will be followed by partial emancipation and partial enlargement. But it is not till the last desire is surrendered, it is not till the last link of the chain is broken, that the emancipation becomes perfect, and the enlargement immense. And this result connects itself with the fact, that the soul, although it may abandon and ought to abandon its own desires, cannot live without desires of some kind. In yielding therefore its own desires, which involves the yielding of its own aims and purposes, it assumes another life, "the life of God." Its desires, therefore, after the change which has been mentioned, are God's desires; its purposes God's purposes; its will God's will. Such a soul cannot remain contracted and shut up in narrow limits. He, who becomes nothing by making the surrender of his own desires, and in so doing assumes, upon this basis of personal nothingness, the

divine nature, necessarily experiences something of the divine enlargedness and immensity. He goes forth at once into a "large place." He can say with the Psalmist, "Thou hast broken my bonds; I will offer thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving." Truly regenerated soul! In ceasing to grasp at self, he gains God. God himself is his; and all that God has is his. He looks upon the wide universe, and calls it his own; because, in having nothing of his own, he has every thing which is God's.

5.—Every thing becomes free, expansive, and immense, because every thing is seen in the immensity of the divine relation. That, which is smallest, assumes a new importance, because God is seen to be present in it. Considered in the merely human relation, it diminishes and becomes nothing; but, considered in the divine relation, it assumes a vastness proportioned to the new aspect in which it appears. The finite is magnified by being made to take hold of the infinite. Time is merged in eternity, and thus assumes something of the expansion of eternity. And God, manifested in Christ, is the sum, the substance, and the glory of all. He, who has experienced this inward enlargement, by the loss of himself in God, knows in a new sense, and after a new manner, the meaning of the Apostle, when he says to the Corinthian brethren, "Therefore let no man glory in men, for all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

6.—The following prayer, written by Fenelon, seems to have been dictated by that state of enlarged confidence in God, which is described in the foregoing remarks.—“O Lord! I know not what I should ask of thee. Thou only knowest what I want; and thou lovest me, if I am thy friend, better than I can love myself. O Lord! Give to me, thy child, what is proper, *whatsoever it may be*. I dare not ask either crosses or comforts. I only present myself before thee. I open my heart to thee. Behold my wants, which I am ignorant of; but do thou behold, and do according to thy mercy. Smite or heal! Depress me or raise me up! *I adore all thy purposes without knowing them*. I am silent. I offer myself in sacrifice. I abandon myself to thee. *I have no more any desire but to accomplish thy will*. Lord, teach me to pray. I pray thee, dwell thou thyself in me by thy Holy Spirit!”

7.—We proceed now to say, that the liberty and enlargement of spirit of which we have attempted to give some account, takes place the moment that we *cease to doubt*. Looking at the subject in another point of view, we have had occasion to remark, that it takes place when the last desire, that is to say, when the last natural or unsanctified desire, is broken. And this also is true. It is desire, which forms the link and the chain of bondage; and the liberation cannot take place till the bondage ceases. But what breaks the link? What sunders the chain? What extinguishes the mere human and unsanctified desire? It is FAITH. Not faith, it is true, in the ordinary sense of the term; not

that imperfect and weak faith, which is characteristic of many minds in the beginning of the christian life ; but still it is FAITH. And this is so obvious, that it seems hardly to require remark. It is as certain as the law of gravitation, as certain as the relations of numbers, as certain as any thing the opposite of which is a contradiction in terms, that full faith in God, that faith which excludes doubt, will break down and extinguish the desire of any thing and every thing, which is not in accordance with God's will.

8.—When we arrive at full faith, therefore, at that state of mind which our pious ancestors termed, in accordance with scripture phraseology, ASSURANCE OF FAITH, and not till then, the soul enters upon the state of broad and full emancipation ; knowing all things by being willing to be ignorant of all things ; enjoying all things by renouncing every thing ; and by rejecting the contracted and contracting desires of the creature, enlarging itself, so far as our present capacity will permit, into the infinity of God's desires.

PART THIRD.

ON THE

RELATION OF FAITH TO THE DIVINE GUIDANCE

OR THE

OPERATION OF THE HOLY GHOST IN THE SOUL.

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CHAPTER FIRST.

"THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU."

Remarks on the inward or spiritual kingdom. Illustrations of the subject from St. Augustine, from Fenelon, and Madame Guyon. God, in a certain sense, present in the soul of every moral being. Especially present with those, who are willing to receive him into their hearts. Not to be sought as a God afar off.

"And he was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come. He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, Lo, there! for, behold, THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU." Luke 17 : 19, 20.—The words, which close this interesting passage of scripture, viz. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU, have at times particularly arrested our attention. They belong to that class of profound and fruitful expressions, which are not read and forgotten, but which adhere to the memory, and give an impulse to the principle of thought. They probably express some important fact in christian experience, or some

great truth in the religious life, which is worthy of being analyzed.

2.—Thus St. Augustine says, in that remarkable and instructive book, entitled his *CONFESSIONS*, “I asked the earth of God, and it answered, I AM NOT HE. I asked the sea and the deeps and the living and creeping things, and they replied, WE ARE NOT GOD. I asked the moving air, but the whole air with its inhabitants answered, Anaximenes was deceived, WE ARE NOT GOD. I asked the heavens, the sun, the moon, and the stars; and they gave the same answer, but they added in the silent voice of their moving and beautiful forms, GOD MADE US. Oh Beauty of ancient days, ancient but ever new! Too late I sought thee; too late I found thee. I sought thee at a distance, and did not know that thou wast near. *I sought thee abroad in thy works, and behold, thou wast within me.*” *

3.—And thus Fenelon also, when he had sought God in vain, outwardly and discursively, in the woods and in the stars, in the beauties and sublimities of the visible earth and heaven, and by forming conceptions of Him external to himself, in some beatific but distant locality, at last found Him, where he had long neglected to look for Him, seated on the throne of his own renovated heart. “Thou art, O my God,” he exclaims in his remarks on God’s Operation in the Soul, “operating without ceasing in the midst of my heart. Thou workest there invisibly, just as a laborer works in the

* *Confessions of St. Augustine*, Bk. X. § 6, as compared with § 27

mines and bowels of the earth. Thou doest every thing, and yet the bulk of men see thee not. They ascribe nothing to Thee. I myself wandered, and strove in vain to find thee at a distance from myself. I tried, by collecting together in my mind all the wonderful works of nature, to frame an idea of thy grandeur. I sought thee among thy creatures ; I did not think of finding Thee in my own heart, where Thou art never absent. No, there is no need, O my God, to descend into the deep, nor to go over the sea, as say the Holy Scriptures, nor to ascend into heaven, to find thee ; for thou art nearer to us than we are to ourselves."

4.—There are some passages in the life of Madame Guyon which have a relation to this subject. "God permitted a religious man," she remarks, "who had just come out of a five years' solitude, to pass by my father's habitation, and make him a visit. My father, knowing the religious concern I was under, advised me to make my condition known to him, which I had no sooner done, signifying the difficulties I had about prayer, but he presently replied, '*Tis, madame, because you seek without what you have within. Accustom yourself to seek God in your heart, and there you will find Him.*' When he had spoken these words, he left me ; but they were like the stroke of a dart, which pierced my heart asunder. They brought to my heart what I had sought for so many years ; or rather they helped me to discover what was there ; but for want of knowing it, I had not enjoyed it. O my God, Thou wert in my heart, and requiredest nothing but a turn-

ing of my mind *inward* to Thee, to make me feel thy presence. O infinite Goodness! Thou wert so near, and I ran hither and thither to seek Thee, but found Thee not. My life was a burden, though my *Happiness* was within me. I was poor in the midst of riches, and starving with hunger near a table spread with dainties, and near a *continual* feast. O beauty, ancient and new, why did I know Thee so late? Alas! I sought Thee where thou wert not, and did not seek Thee where Thou wert. 'Twas for want of understanding these words of the gospel, 'The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo, here! or Lo, there! for, behold, the KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU.' This I now experienced; for then Thou becamest my King, and my HEART was thy kingdom, where thou reignedst as sovereign, and didst what thy will was to have done."

5.—We are brought by these remarks and illustrations to an interesting and important inquiry. In what sense, then, is it true, that God is so really and truly present in the hearts or minds of men, as to render it proper to seek Him there, rather than to seek Him as existent outwardly, and at a distance?

God may be regarded as present within us, in the first place, because all our mental powers, both in their intrinsic nature and in the acts or exercises which they put forth, are evidently sustained by the divine agency inwardly exerted. We do not mean by this remark to exclude or to question the doctrine of man's personal agency or responsibility. Undoubtedly man possesses,

in himself, a delegated power of life and action; a power of life and of action, without which he could not properly be accounted a man; but it is equally true, that he does not possess this power, be it more or less, in any such sense as to exclude the presence, agency, and power of God. It seems to me that God is, and ever must be, most intimately present to all his works. They cannot exist without him. His absence is necessarily synonymous with their annihilation. From the nature of the case, he is, and must be, *physically*, if not morally and responsibly, the support, the basis, and the continuance of their action. In this sense God is present even in the heart or mind of impenitent sinners. He is as truly present, though not in an equal degree, in the mind of the sinner, as in the mind of the saint. The rebellious transgressor looks upward, and hurls his reproaches against God, as if he were in some distant locality, and little does he appear to be aware of what is nevertheless an interesting and solemn truth, that the blessed Being, who is the subject of his insane hostility, is intimately united to the very recesses of his own soul; giving vigor to the intellect that denounces, and sustaining the very heart that hates him.

6.—Again, He is not only present in the minds of impenitent sinners, to sustain physically the internal powers and their action, but as the eternal Word or Teacher, the source of all wisdom and truth, he inwardly instructs, advises, and admonishes. Operating by divine influences, through the legitimate and appro-

priate organs of the REASON and the CONSCIENCE, he becomes an inward voice in the soul. He continually speaks ; but, alas, he is not known nor heard. The precious intimations of the “still small voice” are lost in the tumult and noise of the unholy passions. He is present, but without being recognized. He loves, but without being loved in return. But still he is there ; intimately present to the soul ; however depraved it may be, however rebellious and blind. And in the sense of an ever present sustainer of its powers, and as an inward voice, speaking in the reason and in the conscience, either for its weal or its wo, for its comfort or its reprobation, he will be there for ever.

7.—But we must stop here. It cannot safely be said that he is present in the HEART of the impenitent sinner, in distinction from the reason and the conscience, except in the *physical* sense. God may occupy the intellect and the conscience in an especial manner, and yet be excluded from the heart. But if, in relation to the heart or rather in relation to the affections, he is not present *within*, he is present at the *door*, seeking patiently for admission. “His head is wet with the dew, and his locks with the drops of the night.” His language is, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock ; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” And as soon as men open the door, by removing the strong and indurated bolt of their worldly affections, he comes quicker than his own lightnings, and claims his seat of dominion in the inner soul. It is done so

quickly that there is no longer an opportunity to look for him abroad. *There he is*, rejoicing in his recovered position; forgetting and forgiving all the injury and guilt of his exclusion; purifying and beautifying the mansion, which had been stained with the world's dark sin, and rent with its stormy sorrow.

8.—In connection with these views, we suggest, as a practical inference, that in seeking God, we are not to seek him as a *God afar off*. It is his nature to unite himself with all moral beings, where there is not a positive exclusion. He keeps near us, therefore, even in our rebellion. If it should ever be our happiness to know him in that spiritual unity in which his people are made one with him, we shall find him and know him *within*, and nowhere else. Think not, then, of the spiritual kingdom, at least so far as it has an existence in the present life as an outward locality. Attach no value to the New Jerusalem, as consisting merely or chiefly of burnished walls and golden pavements, and adorned as a bride for her husband. It has a beauty unseen, far above that which is visible. "The kingdom of God is within you." In your souls, if any where in the present state of being, the New Jerusalem shall be set up. There flows the true river of life; there the tabernacle of God is erected. It hath need neither of the sun nor of the moon, for "the Lamb is the light thereof." "And in it there shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie."

But the question still remains, what is the power,

which sets up this hidden kingdom? What mighty influence is it, which breaks the bars and bolts of a selfish heart, and admits the rightful occupant? Whatever may be said of human effort or human instrumentality, it is a thing which never can be done without faith. "Have faith in God;" that degree of faith which is appropriate to so great an object, and the work will not fail to be accomplished. Faith makes those things near, which would otherwise be distant. Faith, building upon nothing, erects a spiritual kingdom, where there was nothing good, nothing righteous before. "The righteousness which is of *faith*," says the Apostle Paul, "speaketh on this wise, Say not in thy heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (That is, to bring Christ down from above.) Or, who shall descend into the deep? That is, to bring Christ again from the dead. But what saith it? The word is *nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart.*"* "Faith," says another passage of the Scriptures, "is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." That is to say, it makes that inwardly perceptible which is outwardly invisible; it makes that real which without it would have no existence; and builds up a pure and beautiful kingdom in the heart, which without its purifying influence would be an utter desolation, a wide and blackened ruin.

* Rom. 10: 6, 7, 8.

CHAPTER SECOND.

ON THE NATURE OF THE OPERATION OF THE HOLY GHOST.

The Holy Spirit dwelling in the soul, the same as God's dwelling there. Of the mystery, which attends the operations of God's Spirit. The operation of God's Spirit illustrated to some extent, by the operation of human minds upon each other. The influences of the Spirit not always distinctly perceptible. Of the variety of his operations. Extract from Arndt. The Holy Spirit teaches men the facts and relations of their existence. The Holy Spirit convinces of sin; discovers the relation of Christ to sinners; is the source of sanctifying influences. Of the nature of his operations in the more advanced periods of christian experience.

WE repeat, therefore, in accordance with what has been said in the preceding chapter, that God is not a God afar off. He is present to every mind, though not in equal degrees. To the pure mind, to the mind that can be described as a truly sanctified mind, he is present in such a sense, that we may speak of him as a God *in-dwelling*. In such a mind the Comforter, who teaches all things, and brings all things to remembrance, has made his abode. It has become, what it is described to be in the Scriptures, the "temple of the Holy Ghost."

2.—Whatever difficulties may attend the mysterious expressions, “the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST,” considered in their relation to each other, and in their relation to the unity of the Godhead, we may be certain of this great fact, that, wherever the Holy Spirit is present, God is not absent; wherever the Holy Spirit operates, God operates; wherever the Holy Spirit dwells, God dwells. If the soul, purified by an inward operation, has become the Temple of the Holy Ghost, as the Scriptures represent it, it has also become as really the temple of the only true and living God. He, whose affections are constantly inspired by the Holy Spirit, is truly united and is united in the highest degree, with the divine nature.

3.—In the accounts, which are given of truly devoted and holy persons in the New Testament, it is often said of them, that they are “*filled with the Holy Ghost.*” Expressions of this kind are applied to Zachariah and Elizabeth, to John the Baptist, to Peter and Stephen, to the disciples on the day of Pentecost, and to the Savior himself. To persons, who have not made the human mind and its operations a subject of special attention, the expressions, “full of,” and “filled with,” which are applied to the mind as recipient of divine influences, are very apt to convey an erroneous impression. It is hardly necessary to say, that these expressions are applied originally to material objects, to objects which are susceptible of material capacity and measurement, and which, therefore, we may speak of, when such is actually the case, as being “filled,” or as being



“full,” in the literal and material sense. So early and so strong is our association with these terms of their application to things having material and measurable capacity, that we can hardly apply them to the mind without thinking of it as something, which has a material shape, which has length and depth, and which consequently is susceptible of being made “full” or of being “filled” in the material import of the terms. In the view of the mind, which is under these material impressions, the operation of the Holy Spirit necessarily assumes a character of earthliness, and becomes material, tangible, and sensible. It is important to guard against such erroneous views. The operation of the Holy Ghost in the human mind, entirely remote from the analogy of material and earthly operations, is spiritual in the highest sense. So that a man’s “being full” or not being full of the Holy Ghost is not a thing to be measured by material capacity, but by mental renovation; is not a thing to be estimated and to be judged of by physical rules and methods, but by a purified judgment, by sanctified dispositions, and by holy outward results. Who, then, is the man, that is “full of the Holy Ghost?” It is he, and he only, who bears Christ’s image. It is he, who is meek, humble, and quiet in spirit. It is he, who is pure in heart. It is he, who, in the exercise of faith, which is the foundation of the whole christian life, has a disposition to do, under all circumstances, the will of his heavenly Father. Such a man is full of the Holy Ghost, not because the pre-

sence and operation of the Holy Ghost is a thing tangible, or visible, or measurable in the material sense, but because, being what he is, and operating as he does operate, and being in both respects a mystery beyond man's comprehension, he is full and perfect in that mind, and on the other hand that mind, whatever may be the degree of its powers, is "full" or "filled" with his presence, which, under the influence of his inward operation, is turned from vice to virtue, from unbelief to a full and assured faith, and from selfishness to purity of love.

4.—The operation of the Spirit of God upon the human spirit, an operation which leads the subject of it without a violation of its moral power and responsibility to appropriate and definite issues, is a great mystery. As we have already had occasion to intimate, it is not explainable on any material facts and principles; nor can it be fully reached and explained, so far as we can perceive, in any other way. I think we may confidently take the ground without any hazard, that it is one of those things, which the human mind, limited as it obviously is in power, cannot now, and perhaps can never fully comprehend. The Scriptures so represent it. "The wind bloweth, where it listeth; and ye hear the sound thereof; but cannot tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth. *So is every one, that is born of the Spirit.*" It ought to be said, however, as the remark may tend to alleviate the perplexities of some persons, that there are *other things*, the truth or fact of which we do not doubt, and which we constantly and

readily receive, considered as truth or facts, but which, in their analysis and explanation, involve to some extent a similar difficulty. If the operation of the Divine Mind on the human mind is mysterious, as it undoubtedly is, the operation of the human mind on other human minds is, to some extent, mysterious also. But the mystery in the latter case, whether it be greater or less, does not prevent our yielding our assent to a fact, which so frequently presents itself to our notice. It is a matter of common observation, for instance, that the stronger mind, in the intercourse of life, gains an ascendancy over the weaker ; the man of clearer perception enlightens and guides the man that is wanting in perception ; the more argumentative and eloquent operates on the less argumentative and eloquent. Mind every where influences and controls mind. How often do we see, when masses of men are assembled together on some public occasion, minds, that were ignorant, inert, and unexcited, at once roused to action by the influence of some higher mind ; made percipient of truth, rendered susceptible of a higher sense of obligation, and strengthened in their purposes. The change is very great and perceptible ; oftentimes great in itself and great in its issues ; and yet it is wrought by an unseen influence ; the influence of mind which no man can see, operating in a mysterious manner upon mind which is equally unseen. But if man can operate thus upon his fellow-man, if a created and limited mind can operate upon other minds, giving them a new direction and bringing them under its control, and what is more, can

do it, without a violation of their personal responsibility and agency, God certainly can do as much, *although we may not be able to explain in either case the mode of its being done.*

5.—When we speak of an operation, no matter whether it be an operation human or divine, it is generally understood to be implied in the remark, that it is an operation *known*. It is rather difficult for us to conceive of our being under the operation of the Holy Spirit, and yet without being distinctly conscious of the operation at the time. And accordingly I think it may be laid down as the general belief in relation to this matter, (not the universal but the more common or general belief,) not only that there is a divine operation, which is more or less prevalent and effective in every christian mind ; but that every such mind is conscious, whatever mysteries may attend it, of such inward operation as a distinct subject of knowledge. Consequently multitudes of persons are looking not merely for the results of the inward operation ; but what is a very different thing, for the perception or knowledge of the operation, in itself considered. They wish to know, not only that the Holy Spirit does really act, and that he exerts upon them a converting and sanctifying influence ; but to know, as a distinct subject of consciousness, the fact of his action whenever it is experienced, as a fact or object in marked and obvious distinction from that of their own mental action. In other words, they not only want the Holy Ghost to be in them which is really the only important thing ;

but they want to *see* the Holy Ghost in them ; they want to see not merely the results of his working, but the working itself. A state of mind, as it seems to us, unwisely and unsubmitively curious, inconsistent with that mystery in the presence and operations of the Holy Ghost, which have already been referred to, and which is likely to be attended practically with the most unfavorable consequences.

6.—In connection with the specific topic, to which we have just referred, we proceed to make the remark, a remark which seems to us to be confirmed both scripturally and experimentally, that the influences of the Divine Spirit within us are not always perceptible. They are not always distinctly perceptible, even in the beginnings of the christian life ; a period in our moral and religious history, when, on account of the great change then wrought, it might be more naturally expected. On the contrary, they may be so gentle, so merely suggestive as it were, that the thought of divine origin will not always be distinguished from the thought of natural origin ; and the truly devotional feeling will hardly be distinguished from that, which has no religious element in it. And the subsequent succession of religious thought, emotion, and desire will be so gentle, so little marked at any given moment by any thing which will distinguish it from other mental states, that the whole mind may be gradually changed and renovated without the subject of the change being able to refer to any particular period as being characterized in his consciousness by a distinctly obvious and perceptible

influence. Such cases are very numerous ; and they include in their number some of the most interesting illustrations of christian devotedness, purity, and faith. Richard Baxter, whose learning and devoted piety are held in honorable remembrance, makes a statement, which goes to confirm in some degree what has now been said. " I was once," he says, " in a meeting of christians as eminent for holiness as most in the land, of whom divers were ministers of great fame ; and it was desired, that every one should give an account of the manner and time of his conversion, and there was but *one* of them all, that could do it. And I aver from my heart," he adds in respect to himself, " that I neither know the year nor the day when I began to be sincere."

7.—There are other cases, in which the new thought, the new feeling, the new desire and purpose are placed so suddenly and distinctly in opposition to thoughts and purposes, which have their origin in the life of nature, as not only to be distinctly marked, but to form a new and memorable era in the mental history. This result depends in part upon the power and vividness of the natural life, as well as upon the degree of the divine influence. The same degree of grace, introduced into a heart that is exceedingly violent and passionate by nature, will generate a more decided inward conflict, and will attract more inward notice, than in a heart, which possesses the same elements, with the exception that it is constitutionally more quiescent and mild. But still, whatever distinctions we may properly make in

such cases as these, it should always be remembered, that God does not limit himself either in the mode or the degree of the divine operation, with the single exception that he does not violate moral agency. Within the limitation, involved in this remark, he operates very variously in different minds ; sometimes by very slight movements, which are scarcely perceptible, but which, being repeated under the guidance of infinite wisdom, bring the soul at last to great and glorious issues ; and sometimes by operations, which in their very beginning are more searching and intense, and which, therefore, produce in the soul a revolution much more sudden and marked than in the other case.

8.—The Holy Spirit may operate upon the soul, but he cannot enter there in the higher sense, and take up his abode there, unless the world, and the things of the world, are first cast out. “If the heart,” says Arndt in his *True Christianity*, “be full of the world, there will be no room for the Spirit of God to enter ; for where the one is, the other cannot be.” And again he says, “Turn away thine heart from the world, the creatures, thyself, and thine own will and affections, that so this Holy Spirit may have room to act freely.” Certain it is, that every thing, which is inspired of God, must have a character appropriate to itself ; something by which it will be known as being of divine origin. If it is not inspired of God, it is inspired of that, which is not God. We cannot serve God and Mammon.

9.—One of the first operations of the Holy Spirit, perhaps the very first, is to teach men the facts and

relations of their own existence. God not only makes man rational and accountable, but he condescends to teach him what he is ; laying before his own mind, so that he may have an inward conviction of what actually exists, the evidences of his rationality, his accountability, and immortality.

10.—Another, which we may perhaps designate as a second operation of the Holy Spirit, is to reprove of sin. “And when the Comforter is come,” says the Savior, “he will reprove the world of sin.” It is a part of the office of the Holy Spirit, by means of an inward operation, to show men, that naturally they have come short of God’s commands, and thus have violated their obligations. This operation may be so gentle, and may be so entirely consonant to the laws of the mind’s action as to appear to the subject of it to be wholly a natural operation. And yet the result may be so distinctly marked, that he shall have a clear perception of his delinquencies, and of the criminality and danger of his position. And it is in accordance with this view, that Arndt in the work, to which we have already referred, says that “whosoever lives a carnal life, *without the inward admonition of the Holy Spirit*, may assure himself, that the Holy Spirit is not in him.”*

11.—Another operation of the Holy Spirit is to show the sinner the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. Under a divine guidance he may be led to see clearly the fitness or propriety of the way of salvation through

* Arndt’s True Christianity, Bk. 3. Ch. 17.

a mediator. And in this manner his belief in Christ, considered as a Savior adapted to his own case, may be so strengthened, that he shall receive him in that capacity. This is a matter so well understood as to lay a foundation for the common remark, that no one ever appreciates his relation to the cross of Christ, and seeks salvation by means of it, except he is led to it by the Spirit of God. It is hardly necessary to say, that this result, which we very properly ascribe to the influences of the Holy Spirit, involves, throughout, successive acts of faith.

12.—Another operation is to sanctify the soul by regulating the affections and the will, of which faith also is the great inward instrument. Sanctification involves chiefly, and especially, the reduction of the affections and the will to their subordinated action and their proper place ; but this result never exists, independently of the operations and influence of the Holy Spirit. This is very obviously intimated by the Apostle Paul, who speaks, in his Epistle to the Romans, of the Gentiles as “being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.” It is the Holy Ghost, therefore, that sanctifies.—But it ought to be added, that the Holy Ghost never operates accidentally ; but being possessed of infinite wisdom, he ever has, and ever *must* have his just principles and laws of inward operation. And we cannot doubt, that it will be found on a careful examination, whether we refer to the Scriptures for evidence or to the personal experience of christians, that he never sanctifies, except in connection with the principle of faith. To this princi-

ple, when divinely brought into exercise, and sustained by a divine operation, all the various and important results, which are embraced under the name of sanctification, may be traced. All faith, even that which is natural, is, in one sense, the work of God. But religious faith is especially his work. It is the great and divine product of the Holy Spirit. And sanctification flows from faith.

13.—It is worthy of notice, that in those minds which have reached the highest results of the inward life, and in which consequently the Holy Spirit has taken up his abode, his operations are not so marked and so perceptible, considered as subjects of personal consciousness, as they frequently are in less advanced periods. And this is what, on a proper view of the subject, might naturally be expected. When the inward operation is complete, when the Holy Ghost has really set up his temple in the heart, the result is, to turn the mind from the consideration of its own acts and experiences, to God. The very height and perfection of its experience, if we may so express it, is to lose the perception and sense of itself in the contemplation of its great and adorable object. The principle on which this view turns is what we may suppose to be constantly exhibited in the experience of angelic minds, and in other holy beings of a higher nature than man. Every thought, every desire, every purpose in these holy beings, is originated by the Holy Ghost. But as this inward divine operation is effected without any resistance on their part, and in a manner so harmonious

with their own mental actions, it never attracts their attention as a distinct object of notice ; nor is their attention directed to the specific feelings to which the divine operation gives rise, but to those objects only, whatever they may be, to which these feelings relate ; and particularly to God around which they centre and in which they dwell. And this is the case, not only with the higher orders of beings, but with all beings whatever, that have experienced the highest results of religion. Their minds do not revert, (at least such is not the natural tendency of their minds,) to the fact or the mode of their sanctification ; but fasten themselves to that, to which sanctification leads, viz. God, God's nature, God's works, God's will, God's glory.

14.—Perhaps, before closing this subject, we should make one remark more. It is a remark of a general nature ; but it involves some important practical results. It is this. The operation of the Holy Spirit in the soul corresponds in time, as it seems to us, with the natural operation ; without being either antecedent or subsequent. That is to say, when the mind acts, if it acts religiously or graciously, the Holy Spirit acts in it *at the very time of its acting*. This position seems to be almost a self-evident one. If the Holy Ghost inspires within us a thought or feeling, or if it modifies those already existing, it must inspire or modify them at the very time, when they first come into existence or when they are the subjects of modification, and at no other time.

15.—And accordingly we are not to take it for granted, that the presence of the Holy Spirit, in the formation or modification of an antecedent exercise of mind, necessarily implies his presence and his operation in an exercise which is subsequent. We are not to suppose, that it is possible for us, in the positive and absolute sense of the terms thus to consolidate what is appropriate to successive periods of time, and actually *to lay up grace beforehand*; which it is obvious would be the case, if what now exists *necessarily* implied the existence of that which follows. The Holy Spirit may be present in our minds TO-DAY; and he may operate there; and in consequence of this operation we may be the subjects of very just and pious feelings; but the grace of TO-DAY, although it furnishes in many respects encouragement and strength for the future, is not, and cannot be the grace of TO-MORROW. So that, as far as the subject now under consideration is concerned, the true doctrine of inward divine agency is, that each day, each hour, each moment brings with it not only its own exercises, but its own divine operation. We have of God, and can have of Him, only so much as we have NOW.

16.—And hence we infer, in accordance with what is laid down in the Scriptures, that the christian life is, and must be one of *constant watchfulness*. If we are careful to correspond to the laws of the divine operation, we shall see to it, that we give to God the PRESENT MOMENT. So that we may justly say in view of

what has now been remarked, as well as for other reasons, that there is a valid foundation for the doctrine of "living by the moment," which has been found so valuable and precious in the experience of many devout persons. So true it is, in the language of the Apostle, whether we regard its application to impenitent persons or to christians; "Behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation."



CHAPTER THIRD.

OF THE MENTAL STATE MOST SUITABLE TO THE CONSTANT IN-DWELLING OF THE HOLY GHOST.

All men are, to some extent, the subjects of a divine operation. Men love darkness rather than light. Of the special and effectual operations of the Holy Spirit. Of the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit. Of the state of mind which is most favorable to his inward and constant residence. Explanations of quietness of spirit. God necessarily takes up his residence in the truly subdued and quiet mind. That quietness or stillness of spirit, which is the prerequisite of the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit, exists in connection with an assured state of faith.

WE have already had occasion to intimate, that God is present, in a certain sense, to all persons ; those in their natural state, as well as others. Through the medium of the reason and the conscience, he is not only present to all, but he operates upon all ; giving intellectual understanding in connection with physical support. There is not a being living, possessed of perception and of a moral nature, on whom, by the influences of the Holy Spirit, he does not operate to the extent, at least, of giving light. And it may be said further and still more specifically, that he gives such a degree of

light, as shall render all such beings, in whatever they do, personally and morally responsible.

2.—But it is worthy of especial notice, that, when the imparted light is limited to that precise degree, neither more nor less, which secures accountability, it appears to be universally unavailable. That is to say, men universally agree in rejecting the light. And accordingly the whole world naturally is not only under sin; but deliberately rejecting the light, which would lead them to a better state of things, is under present condemnation. “The light shineth in darkness,” says the Apostle John, “and the darkness comprehendeth it not.” And again it is said in the express words of the Savior, “THIS IS THE CONDEMNATION, that light is come into the world; and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” Why it is that men, having the light, should hate the light, and not come to it, but should love darkness rather than the light, is a matter truly astonishing.

3.—All men, therefore, would die in their sins, and under a condemnation without any remedy so far as we can perceive, were it not for an operation of the Holy Ghost, *giving light additional to that light which has already been spoken of*; and which, without violating their moral agency, shall so spread illumination through the mind as to lead to repentance and newness of life. On what principles it is that God bestows this additional illumination, so that some “submit” to Christ and are converted, while others “reject” him and remain unconverted, is what no created mind is able, fully, to explain. We only know, that this great result, which

divides the world into the two classes of believers and unbelievers, of saints and sinners, can never be at variance, on whatever principles it may take place, with the highest rectitude. In this case as in others God acts as a sovereign ; but he never acts unjustly or unkindly, or at all inconsistently with the fact that "*he is no respecter of persons.*" "The wind bloweth," says the Savior, "where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell, whence it come and whither it goeth ; *so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*"

4.—But the particular examination of the specific topics, to which we have now referred, does not come within the object of the present work. These are topics, which are frequently discussed by able writers, and are the constant theme of the pulpit. Our subject is not so much justification by faith, as sanctification by faith ; not so much how we may be led to the Gospel in the first instance, as how we may be kept in the Gospel ; not so much how we may be pardoned, as how, being pardoned, we may live day by day with "a conscience void of offence." In other words, our inquiry is, in what way shall we live, so that we shall be able to say at all times, that we are under a divine guidance, and that the "kingdom of God is within us." "I will pray to the Father," says the Savior, "and he shall give you another Comforter, *that he may abide with you forever ;* even the spirit of truth ; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him ; but ye know him, for **HE DWELLETH WITH YOU, AND SHALL BE IN YOU.** John 14 : 15, 17. "It is certain

from Scripture," says Fenelon, "that the Spirit of God dwells in us, that it acts there, that it prays there without ceasing, that it there asks for us what we ourselves know not how to ask for, that it animates us, speaks to us in silence, suggests all truth to us, and unites us so to itself, that we become one spirit with God."

5.—The "abiding" of the Holy Spirit, "his indwelling," as a perpetual inhabitant in human hearts—there cannot well be a theme more interesting and important than this. And in pursuance of the leading object of this chapter, we proceed to say, that the state of mind, as it seems to us, which is most favorable to this great result, in other words, to that inward kingdom, which is set up by the constant indwelling and operation of the Holy Spirit, is that of inward meekness or quietness. "A quiet state of mind," says Ruysbroke, an ancient but devout writer, and one who sustains a leading rank among writers on inward experience, "a state of mind, free from its own troubled imaginings and operations, is God's habitation, his *inward kingdom and temple*."* "Interior peace," says Pere Lombez, "gives full liberty to the Spirit of God to act in the soul, whether it be to enlighten and inflame her with his love, or to lead her securely in the path he had marked out for her. Hence it is, that the Almighty declares by his Prophet, that, to speak to our heart, he must lead us into the retired and solitary place."† "God," says

* As quoted in the *La Vie de L'Esprit* par Anthoine de Rojas, CH. I.

† Interior Peace, Pt. I. CH. 2d.

the devout author of the Mute Christian, "dwells not in spirits that are unquiet, and in confusion; but he dwells in peaceable and quiet spirits. Unquiet spirits can take in neither counsel nor comfort, grace nor peace." He refers to a remark of Luther, that God doth not dwell in Babylon, but in Salem; and adds significantly, that Babylon signifies *confusion*, and Salem signifies *peace*.

6.—A quiet spirit is one, in which the natural desires, in distinction from God's desires and will, no longer exist. Separated from the world and the world's thoughts and pleasures, it has no desires, no plans, no purposes of its own. Selfishness, using the term as expressive of that degree of love for ourselves, which is inconsistent with right and with God's claims, ceases. The language of the soul, (not always uttered it is true, but always really existent,) is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do." "Lo, I come to do thy will." It will be noticed, therefore, when we use the phrase "quietness of spirit," in connection with the subject now before us, we do not mean a resignation or quietness, in the ordinary or mitigated sense of the terms; but one, which is real, one which is entire, one which brings the whole mind into subjection. The quiet mind, in this sense of the terms, has no preference, no election, which results from the impulse of its own tendencies. It is precisely in that situation, being free from any desires or purposes of its own, in which the smallest possible divine influence will give it the true direction. In other words, while it remains in this condition, it is

susceptible of being moved, only as it is moved upon by the Spirit of God.

7.—In such a state of mind, it is not a mere matter of arbitrary will or choice; whether God shall be present to the soul by the influences of his Holy Spirit, or not. It is not a matter of mere arbitrary will or choice, whether he shall be in the most intimate union with it or not. On the contrary, his presence, and that too in the highest sense of the terms, is an invariable result; a result which, if not physically, is morally necessary. God's nature, that which constitutes him what he is, will not, and cannot allow it to be otherwise. It is a great error, which men, in their unbelief are very apt to fall into, to suppose, that God is, or can be, indifferent to his creatures. "God is Love." Love is his nature, as well as his name; the great moral element of his being, as well as the appropriate designation which indicates him. And being love practically as well as essentially, it is true of him, whether we regard him in his own person or in the person of Jesus Christ, that he always "stands at the door and knocks;" and that he would always enter the heart at once; and would take up his abode there; and would always dwell there, were it not for the opposition which unsanctified nature presents. And accordingly whenever the natural or selfish desire, in distinction from the sanctified desire, ceases, then all opposition ceases; all resistance is taken away; and God enters and dwells in the soul of course. The Holy Spirit is no longer grieved. He comes to his own, and his own receive

him. There is a mingling of the two natures into one. Not a physical, but a moral union. So that it can now be said, that the human nature, which had long been alienated, once more finds its place in the divine.

8.—These views are founded partly upon the fact, that the Spirit of God, using the terms in accommodation in some degree to the human comprehension of things, is a susceptible or tender Spirit; a Spirit that may be easily and effectually grieved and resisted. It is said of the Savior in the Gospels, that, when he was come to his own country, “he did not many mighty works there, *because of their unbelief.*” When Paul first preached to the Jews at Rome, he “expounded and testified the kingdom of God” to them from morning till evening, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the Law of Moses and out of the Prophets, but “*some believed not.*” Seeing this result, he declared to them in the words of the Prophet Isaiah, that hearing they did not understand, and seeing they did not perceive; that their ears were dull of hearing, and their eyes were closed; and concluded by saying, “Be it known, therefore, unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.” The Spirit of God, which operated upon their minds in connection with his preaching and personal efforts, seems to have been grieved and ultimately driven away, by the hardness of their hearts. And hence it is, that we have that important direction, which ought to sound to every christian’s heart, like the voice of a trumpet, “**QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT.**”

9.—We say then, that the views, which have been expressed, are founded partly on the fact, that the Spirit of God is easily resisted and grieved; and partly on the additional fact which is seldom recognized though exceedingly important, that every natural desire, in distinction from sanctified desire, except such desire as is purely instinctive, does of itself, and necessarily, constitute a state of resistance to the Holy Spirit. Here is a point, upon which men generally, and religious people as well as others, do not appear to have a full understanding. They do not readily receive and appreciate the fact that every desire, which is not from God, stands like a strong wall against him. We know very well, that it is possible for this resistance to be overcome; and we know also, in the case of every truly sincere and religious person, that this propitious result is a thing, not only possible, but is actually realized in a greater or less degree. If the desires are in a considerable degree subdued, the Holy Spirit may be said to have his dominion in the heart, in an imperfect sense. Nor can there be any thing more than this imperfect entrance and possession, so long as any portion of this life of nature, self-moving and self-confident as it always is, continues to remain. But where desire ceases, Satan's dominion is effectually overthrown; so that the way is open, as it never was before, for the Spirit's triumphant entrance, and for the establishment of God's inward dominion.

10.—Perhaps we ought to delay a moment longer upon this doctrine, in order to ascertain its precise po-

sition in a philosophical point of view. Our doctrine, in accordance with that of many judicious writers on christian experience, is, that desire must cease ; otherwise the Holy Spirit cannot be *in-dwelling* ; in other words, cannot take up his abode fully and permanently in the heart. And yet it must be admitted, looking at the subject philosophically and with particular reference to the mode of the mind's formation and action, that there is not any such thing, and cannot be any such thing, as an absolute extinction of desire ; neither in God, men, nor angels. Desire is a necessary and unalienable attribute of every rational being. To be absolutely without the desire of that, which as rational beings we know to be desirable, would be an evidence of irrationality. We ought to say, therefore, that we use the form of expression, just as it is used by many writers on experimental religion who adopt a similar view on this subject, *in a specific sense*. What we mean, is, not that desire *absolutely*, but that the *natural*, the *unsanctified* desire has ceased. We lose all desire, which does not seriously recognize God ; we lose all desire which originates in the life of self, because we now desire nothing but that the will of God may be accomplished. God's desire is substituted for our own. And God's desire can never be constantly fulfilled in us, moment by moment, but by the constant in-dwelling and operations of the Holy Ghost. Acting, moving, and living, not from a self-interested impulse, but in accordance with a reason and conscience enlightened by the Holy Spirit, we act and live in accor-

dance with God's desire. In other words, God's desire becomes our own. But it is self-evident, that this never can be, until the antagonistical desire ceases.

11.—We know very well, that this is a state of inward experience, which is not attained to by all persons, that it is seldom reached by persons in the early periods of their religious experience, and that it is generally preceded by much inward conflict. But it is obviously a possible state of mind; there is nothing in it which is contrary to reason; it is just that state of mind, which existed in the Savior; it is a state of mind, which is either recognized or inculcated in numerous passages of Scripture. There is nothing more obvious from the conversations of the Savior in the latter part of John's Gospel than this one thing, that the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, comes into the world, not merely to inspire men with sentiments of penitence in order that they may be forgiven, but that he may abide with them, and that he may set up, in inward spiritual unity, his throne and dwelling place in sanctified hearts.

12.—This state of mind not only implies the existence of faith; but I think it will not be surprising, after what has been remarked, when we say further, that it implies that degree of it, which is usually denominated Assurance of Faith. The soul is never quiet, never perfectly established against the power of inward and outward temptation, never free from the influence of unsanctified desire, until faith is triumphant. But the question naturally arises here, Who is it, or what is

it, which is the source of this strong faith? The answer is, the Spirit of God. God himself gives faith. The same mighty being, that accomplishes the work, *begins* it; a work always carried on, from beginning to end, in accordance with man's moral agency; but always in such a manner as to glorify God himself alone. But still the operation begun, is not the operation completed. The operation, carried on, when every thing is tempestuous and antagonistical, is not the same operation with that, which is prosecuted, when every thing is victorious and at rest. When a man is in contest with himself, partly in war and partly in peace, partly subdued and partly belligerent, he is in a very different position from that in which his inward enemies are cast out, and when he can say, in the language of Scripture, "lift up your heads, O ye gates, and the King of glory shall come in." If the contest is carried on by the Holy Spirit through the inward instrumentality of faith, if faith as the inward and subordinate instrument sustains it step by step from its earliest beginnings through all the subsequent violence of its progress; it is equally true, that faith, considered in the relation which has been mentioned, gains the victory in the battle which it has waged, and that it perpetuates the victory, which it has gained. When, therefore, we say, that a great work must be accomplished, before the Holy Spirit can become indwelling in the heart, we would not have it understood, that man does the preparatory work, and that the Holy Ghost comes in at the end of it, and enters into the rest and victory of another's labors. It

is very far from this. The Holy Ghost prepares his own habitation. He strikes the first blow in this spiritual work ; he inspires the first breathings and the very beginnings of the life of faith ; and as the contest thickens, he gives greater and greater strength to faith, till by faith increased to ASSURANCE OF FAITH and by this alone, he drives out his enemies from their central position in the heart, and having pacified it from all its commotions and rendered it a pure and tranquil habitation, he there sets up his inward dominion. At this result, unspeakably glorious, as it obviously is, let every christian aim. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God ; and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy ; for the temple of God is holy, which temple are ye." And again, "Know ye not, that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own ? For ye are bought with a price ; therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." And again, "Ye are the temple of the living God. As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

1 Cor. 3 : 16, 17. 6 : 19, 20. 2d Cor. 6 : 16.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

RELATION OF FAITH TO PREPARATIONS FOR PRAYER.

It is harder to trust God for those things which are inward, than for those which are outward. Some of the evils of refusing to trust God for our inward experience. The doctrine of the chapter stated. Conditions preliminary, and necessary to its being realized. First, the mind should be entirely resigned to God's will; second, should have full faith in God. Statement of the result. Additional remarks.

It is generally admitted, I believe, that the doctrines of faith, when practically received into the heart, are abundantly efficacious in leading us to put our trust in God, in relation to things of an outward and worldly nature. In some cases our confidence rises so high, that we very willingly and cheerfully leave it with Him, to decide, whether we shall be rich or poor, sick or well, persecuted or befriended, honored or unhonored. In regard to every thing of this nature, we have no doubt, that he will order all things right; and we do not hesitate to trust Him with entire reliance.

2.—It is a much harder thing to trust God for our

FEELINGS. It implies a greater self-crucifixion and a higher degree of faith to trust God for our inward experiences, than it does to trust Him for the outward incidents of food, raiment, and dwelling-places, or for earthly friendships and favor. It is true, that all persons, who have a right understanding of christianity, speculatively recognize their dependence on the Holy Spirit for all right feelings ; but it is too often the case, that they contradict their professed belief, by endeavoring to live inwardly by their own works. Their practice and their theory are not coincident.

3.—We will proceed, in the first place, to specify some of the evils of this course. One evil result of attempting to originate and regulate our religious feelings by an exclusive effort of our own, instead of merely acting in concurrence with the antecedent, prevenient, or “preventing” grace of God, is, that, from the nature of the case, we are always and necessarily, by taking such a course, involved in some degree of perplexity. The religious feelings, when they are such as they should be, will receive new modifications, will be subject to more or less of variation in accordance with the particular occasions, on which they arise. It requires, therefore, almost a divine or infinite wisdom, to know the precise kind and degree of feeling, which are appropriate to such occasions ; especially as every occasion differs in some particulars more or less minute from every other occasion, and consequently requires its specific state of mind, differing more or less from every other state of mind. To attempt, therefore, to originate

and regulate our feelings under such circumstances, independently of the antecedent or "preventing" grace of God, will necessarily be very perplexing; and will be attended with many discouragements. We feel, that our imperfect wisdom is not adequate to an operation, which evidently requires divine wisdom.

4.—Another evil, resulting from this source, is, that, by attempting to originate our own feelings independently of God, we are necessarily forming habits of acting in our own strength. The Savior says, "without my Father I can do nothing." This is as true of the followers of Christ, as of Christ himself. Absolute dependence upon God for inward, as well as outward results, is one of the first principles of religion. It is a great truth in religion, although apparently contradictory in the expression, that those are strongest in God who have nothing in themselves; and that those, who "have nothing, possess all things." But that system, which requires us to originate religious feelings in our own strength, is inconsistent with this condition of entire dependence upon God and of inward nothingness. It implies, of course, an undue reliance upon ourselves, and nourishes and strengthens such a reliance; a result not more unscriptural, than it is positively injurious.

5.—Another evil, resulting from the attempt to originate right feelings, by our own inward inspection and our own inward effort, instead of leaving their origination with God operating by the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit, is, that our minds, by taking such a course,

will naturally and almost necessarily be turned away from God. It is a characteristic of the truly holy soul, that it ever has the face of its thoughts and affections turned upward, and in one direction. It is in that position, that, like flowers turned towards the sun, it meets and receives divine influences ; which cannot well be done, if it is turned chiefly in the direction of its own movements.—And it may be added here, that this unfavorable position of things, involving, as it obviously does, a combination of undue reliance on our own strength, with a turning or aversion from God to ourselves, will expose us inevitably to temptations from Satan. We are then in the precise position, which is most likely to invite his cruel attacks. He will assault us in various ways. And the result will be, (a result, which the personal experience of Christians abundantly confirms,) that we shall have feelings in a greater or less degree variant from what they should be on the occasions actually occurring ; combined with more or less of perplexity, fear, and sorrow. Our language will be, “I do not know that I feel right ;” “I wish that I could feel differently ;” “I am afraid that I am not acceptable to God in the exercises of mind, which I have had.” It is well known, how often expressions such as these are uttered. And it is not so clearly understood, as it ought to be, how a desire for holy feelings, unaccompanied by a full trust in God for their origination, may lead to these painful results. Such results may always be expected to follow under such circumstances, because the system from which they

spring, is founded on unbelief, and is dishonorable to God.

6.—We are prepared now, in connection with what has been said, to lay down and illustrate the proposition, that we should trust God for our religious feelings, as we would for any thing and every thing else. If this proposition be a correct one, it is evident, that the relation of religious faith to religious feeling is an indispensable and most important one. It is unnecessary to repeat here the promises, on which this doctrine is founded. All internal religious good is involved in the gift of the Holy Spirit; and we know from his own declarations, that God is always ready and willing to grant the Holy Spirit to them that believingly ask Him; even more so, as he himself has illustrated the subject, “than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children.” God, then, will grant us right religious feelings, (that is to say, those feelings which are precisely appropriate to the occasions on which they arise,) if we desire it, and have full faith in Him.

7.—There are, however, certain conditions on the part of men, which are necessary to be fulfilled, in order to secure this desirable result. And one is, that we must be in that state of humble and sincere resignation to God’s will, which will imply, that we have no preference of one feeling over another. It will be understood, of course, that we are speaking of religious feelings, of gracious feelings. Self-will, wherever it exists, stands directly in the way of the divine operation. If, looking at the subject in all its relations, in its rela-

tions to God as well as to ourselves, we set up a choice or will of our own, if we have a preference of a particular set or class of religious feelings over another class or set of religious feelings, it is self-evident, that we have no inward desire or prayer, that is to say, we have no *true* desire, no *true* prayer, that God should excite within us just such feelings *as he sees best*. It is very obvious, that under such circumstances we take the matter out of his hands. We repeat it, therefore, that, in order to have true religious exercises, such exercises as are best for us and are truly appropriate to our situation, we must leave it entirely with Him, without any choice or preference one way or the other. It is not, until we are brought to this state, to the position of true stillness, to the beautiful silence of spirit, in which the soul continually says to itself, in reference both to inward and outward things, "THY WILL BE DONE," that we can be sure on spiritual principles of the divine guidance.

8.—A second condition, antecedent and prerequisite to the result, is, that we must have entire faith in God, that he will certainly do that which He has promised. Without faith it is impossible to please God. To doubt is to offend him, and to cause the withdrawal of his presence. This is so well understood and so generally acknowledged, that it will be unnecessary to remark upon it, except to say, and to request particular attention to it, that our faith must be strong, *entire*. "Ask in FAITH," says the Apostle James, "*nothing wavering*. For he, that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. Let not that man

think, that we shall receive any thing of the Lord." In connection with these conditions, the result infallibly follows, viz. that we shall have those gracious or religious feelings, which are appropriate to any given occasion, and which are right and acceptable in the sight of God.

- 9.—We could almost assert the certainty of this result, independently of the divine promises. Such is the nature of the mind, that it cannot be without feelings of some kind. The feelings have their laws of origin and progress. And accordingly it is a matter of course, if the mind be unoccupied by previous interests and prejudices, if the mind be in a state of indifferency in itself, (that is, in a disposition to follow the right without any unfavorable bias from selfish interests,) this indifferency will be brought to a termination, and
- will be made to result in feelings, which are suitable to the occasion, *by the occasion itself*. The occasion will necessarily determine its action under such circumstances. And the mind, there being no antecedent bias of personal interest, and the occasion will fit each other. And it is a reasonable supposition, therefore, that the mind in the exercise of its feelings, if the occasion be fully understood and fully present, will be right. But, however the subject may appear, viewed in the light of nature, it is certain, that the promises of God, when received into the heart as they ought to be received, will ensure holy feelings. When the promises are believed in as they ought to be believed in, and when there is no influence from prejudice or passion, but

a humble and earnest desire, that God's will may be done within us, we may be sure, that on all occasions which arise and on all their varieties, he will accomplish in the soul whatever he has promised to do, and whatever he sees and knows to be best.

10.—If these views are correct, as they seem to us to be so, they relieve us from some practical embarrassments. A person proposes, for instance, after the fatigues and perplexities of the day, when the mind is somewhat distracted perhaps and diverted from things of a serious nature, to attend a religious meeting in the evening. As he approaches the place of worship, and as he engages in the introductory services, he desires to have suitable religious feelings. What course shall he take? The common course seems to be, to excite or “get up,” as it is sometimes expressed, a degree of feeling more or less, by a voluntary effort; by suddenly bringing before the mind a variety of motives calculated to excite feeling, sometimes by that sympathetic quickening which results from bodily movement and excitation, by the charms of music which are addressed in the first instance to the outward senses, and other methods of this kind. We do not feel prepared to condemn these methods, without proper distinctions and qualifications. If these methods are employed, in order to originate religious feelings of themselves, which in all probability is sometimes done without a person's being fully conscious of his own intentions, they are not to be approved. If they are employed merely to aid in putting the mind in a suitable position for the existence of

feelings, *originated by the Holy Spirit*, a different view may be taken of them. But it is an obvious remark here, that the methods, which may vary with persons and occasions, are of less consequence than the *principle*, which is permanent and unchangeable. The principle is this ; the mind should be religiously quiet ; that is to say, it should, on religious considerations, cease from itself, from its selfish interests, its fears in relation to God's veracity, its prejudices, all inordinate passion ; every thing, in short, which is inconsistent with leaving itself, in submissive and deeply confiding repose, in the hands of God. Renouncing itself, and believing that God will do more and better for it than it can ask or think, it should become, and it should continue to be, a "*little child*." The sincere prayer of the heart should be, "Lord, give that spiritual bread, which Thou seest best for me at the present time. I have nothing of my own ; I know nothing ; and Thou hast taught me to cease from my own desires and to put my trust in Thee. I am in Thy hands, as clay in the hands of the potter. Grant to me on this occasion those spiritual exercises, which will most glorify thyself."

11.—The result of these principles and of these methods of proceeding will always be, that God will be present in the heart. But it ought to be added that he will be present, and be present only *in his own way* ; not in the creature's way, not in the way of our antecedent thoughts and anticipations, but *in his own way*. Remain, therefore, quiet and resigned in spirit, antecedent to the divine operation ; and remain in the

same state, whatever may be the nature of the religious exercises, which may follow. If your mind be raised in thankfulness to God, it being the work of God, it is of course well. If it be exercised with sorrow for sinners, as the feeling though different has the same divine origin, it is equally well. If it be turned in the direction of personal humiliation and penitence, the result will still be in accordance with the previous supplication, viz. that God should do as He sees best. Even if, contrary to what would be human expectation in the case, we are assailed with heavy temptations, and find that the grace of God is merely manifested in giving us support under them, we may still know assuredly that it is all well ; and that God is glorified in us. If there is dissatisfaction of mind, if there is any thing the opposite of entire resignation of spirit, it will be a proof of a want of sincerity and resignation in the previous state of mind ; that is to say, it will be a proof, that we were not sincere in praying, that God's will might be accomplished.

12.—These views will be found to be supported, not only by the Scriptures in passages too numerous and familiar to be specified, but by many judicious writers on Christian experience. Mr. Fletcher of Madely, a man of learning as well as great piety, in writing to one of his correspondents, says to him ; “ use no *forced* labor, to raise a *particular frame* ; nor tire, fret, and grow impatient, if you have no comfort ; but meekly acquiesce, and confess yourself unworthy of it. Lie prostrate in humble submission before God, and *patient*—

ly wait for the smiles of Jesus." * Certain it is, if we have fully consecrated ourselves to God, and if we patiently look to him for gracious exercises, fully believing in him as the God of the promises and a God of truth, we shall have those feelings which he sees to be best, and which, whatever human wisdom might suppose in the case, will in reality be best. The common experience of christians, every where and every day, confirms this position. We have heard it related of a pious old man, wholly uneducated but a man greatly taught by the Spirit of God, that he was in the habit of entering on his devotions, not by saying in the usual form, "let us pray," but by saying, "*let us ask God for a prayer.*" This, certainly, was in accordance with the views and dispositions of the disciples when they said, "Lord, teach us to pray." And it may safely be added, that it is in accordance with every passage of Scripture, which requires us to renounce ourselves and to put our whole trust in God.

13.—These principles and directions are practically very important. They keep the soul in communion with God, and they keep it in inward rest. But we wish to add this indispensable remark, which has already been implied in part in what has been said; viz. that they apply only to those, *who have given up all*. Those, who have laid all upon the altar in the spirit of an everlasting consecration, and who at the same time fully believe in what God has promised, will find them

* Benson's Life of Rev. John Fletcher, p. 99.

always true, and always available. To those, who take any other course, they will not apply. They will not even be understood by them. To such persons we know not what principles to propose, nor what directions to give. There can be no philosophy of practical religion, (there can be much said and written upon it undoubtedly, but there can be no true philosophy of it,) except on the principle, of entire consecration ; and simply because, as it seems to us, it is impossible that there should be any such thing, deliberately and intentionally, as a half-way religion.

14.—The doctrine, which has been laid down, is important among other things, because it strikes directly at the life of nature. Any system of religious experience, which does not imply in its results the entire crucifixion of the Old Adam, a crucifixion, deep, thorough, and unsparing, is, and must be false. It is not enough, therefore, to say, that we will renounce ourselves and trust God in some respects and not in others ; making an election from our own impulses ; assigning a part of the administration of our affairs to God, and reserving a part to our own strength and our own wisdom. And accordingly it is not enough for a man to say, that he will trust God for food, for raiment, for health, and other things of an outward nature, while he fears and refuses to trust him for the origination, by a divine influence, of his inward religious exercises. Trust, in both cases, is necessary ; in both cases is indispensable. There is no true and effectual crucifixion without it. And we may add, in this case as in

all others, that the deeper trust implies the higher crucifixion. To renounce ourselves entirely and to trust God with an entire reliance for our inward exercises, for what may be denominated our *spiritual* bread, implies, beyond all question, a greater depth and reality of self-crucifixion, than to trust him *merely* for our *temporal* bread.

15.—This doctrine meets fully and emphatically, although it might appear to be otherwise on a slight inspection, all those Scriptural demands, which require us to labor, to use efforts, “to strive to enter in.” The state of mind, which we have been describing, is far from being a stupid and inactive state, although it dare not, and will not rashly lay its hand upon the Ark, and assume to itself what belongs to God. But we may well ask, what soul gives better evidence of earnestly desiring, of earnestly striving, and even “*agonizing*” to do the will of God, than that which resolutely crucifies all the suggestions of nature and all the movements of self, in order that God may accomplish his own will, and may truly take up his abode in the soul as “the one all in all.”

16.—These views are favorable to consistency of christian life. They are the true preventive of the alternating system in religious experience, the system of elevations and depressions, or inordinate heat and inordinate cold. Whether we are on the mount of inward joy, or in the furnace of inward affliction, or whatever other diversities of experience we may be called upon to pass through, we can always say, if we

live in the manner which has been described, "IT IS ALL WELL," because we know that the will of God is accomplished in us.

17.—We observe in conclusion, that the view which has been given, more than any and all others, tends to glorify God. "The husbandman," says Molinos in his *Spiritual Guide*, "sets a greater esteem upon the plants which he sows in the ground, than on those that spring up of themselves, because the latter, springing up in ground unprepared and without appropriate care and nourishment, never come to seasonable maturity. In the same manner God esteems and is better pleased with the virtue which he sows and infuses into the soul, (as being sunk into its own nothingness, calm and quiet, retreated within its own centre, and without any election,) than all the other virtues which the soul pretends to acquire by its own election and endeavors." * In order to rectify human nature, and to make us what we should be, we must go out of, and above human nature, even to God himself manifested in Christ, the great Sower of the true *Spiritual seed*. "*O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in God is thy help.*"

* *Spiritual Guide* of Michael de Molinos, Chap. 6.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

ON SPECIAL SPIRITUAL BURDENS.

Every holy soul has something to do or to suffer. The burden of the Lord is one imposed, not one assumed. Of the duty of waiting upon God in connection with spiritual burdens. The burden of the Lord always an appropriate one. Spiritual burdens often attended with specific faith. Remarks on the nature of this faith. Its dangers. Of praying for individuals on their request. Letter of Antonia Bourignon. Remarks upon it.

THE soul, which is fully animated by the life of faith, and which in being so is a soul wholly given to God, has no desire, as it certainly has no expectation, of leading an inactive, useless life. And as God has fitted it much more than souls, which are in a less advanced state, to bear its appropriate burden, we should naturally suppose, that he would correspond at proper times to the grace he has given by the trial or the duty he imposes. That burden, whatever it may be, and whether it come in the shape of something to be done or something to be endured, it is always ready to bear. Such a soul remembers, that its Master was a man afflicted; that he had something to do and something to

suffer. And he himself has said ; “ *It is enough for the disciple, that he be as his master, and the servant as his Lord.* ”

2.—In considering the interesting and somewhat difficult subject of special spiritual burdens, we proceed to remark, in the first place, that the burden of the Lord, (that which can properly and truly be called the *Lord's* burden,) is a burden *imposed*, not a burden assumed, a burden which we cheerfully take upon our shoulders when God places it there, and not a burden which we take without God. In this world of temptation and of trial, God has seen fit for wise reasons to plant our way with crosses, and it is our business, not to alter their number or to disarrange their position, but to meet and to bear them as they are. If, irrespective of God's inward direction and grace, we undertake to place a load on our own shoulders, the usage of language would undoubtedly authorize us to speak of it as a burden ; but we should distinctly understand, that it is our own burden, and not the Lord's. On the determination of this question, namely, whether the burden which we bear comes from ourselves or from God, many things depend.

3.—The question naturally arises here, How shall we know, whether the burden, which we bear, is from ourselves, or from God ? We determine this, in part, by the state of mind we were in, when it came upon us. There is a state of mind in his people, which God requires, which he regards with interest and kindness, and which, in connection with his providences, results

in their being led into all necessary truth and duty. And accordingly we proceed to say, that in the first instance our true attitude is that of WAITING ; that is to say, of confiding and watchful expectation. The unceasing language of the heart should be, " Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? " We may be well assured, if God has inspired in the soul the truly acceptable and sanctifying principle, the principle which makes the soul like himself, that of a living and effective faith, he does not intend, it shall remain idle. In his own time and way he will so adjust his providences as to bring out its strength both of endurance and action, and thus to ascertain and test its true value. And, therefore, we assert it is our proper business, in the first instance, to be in the attitude of humble and quiet waiting, and in the distrust of ourselves to have our attention directed to him, who alike knows, and who alone knows, what is to be done, and who is to do it.

4.—We do not mean to imply, in saying that we must wait, that we are to remain intellectually inactive. Far from this. What we mean is this. We are to divest ourselves of all self-interested activity, of all inordinate and wrong passion, of all undue eagerness ; and in great calmness and purity of spirit, to exercise the powers of perception and judgment which God has given us, looking to Him for assistance and guidance, and fully believing that He will so open his Providences as to make the path of action and of suffering plain before us. It is remarkable to what a degree of accuracy the operation of the human mind may in this way be

brought, when exercised upon questions of morals and duty. The important principle is to keep our own mental action in subordination to the divine leading. And this we do by suppressing our own interested, prejudiced, and passionate activity, by permitting the perceptive and conscientious part of our nature to act without being biassed by those unholy influences ; and by opening our hearts to receive, in the exercise of faith, the promised assistances of divine grace. This may properly be called waiting upon God. And when we thus wait, we may rely upon it, that He will peaceably but surely guide us ; and that, in particular, He will lead us to a knowledge of that burden of duty or of suffering, whenever He sees fit to impose one upon us, which He has prepared us to bear.

5.—The burden of the Lord, whatever it may be, will always be a suitable or appropriate one. God never, in any case, acts either accidentally or arbitrarily ; but always from principle and from the highest wisdom. For instance, He never will impose a burden upon a man, which it is impossible for him to bear. This would be inappropriate and unreasonable. He will never, by the operations of the Holy Spirit, produce a conviction in the mind of a person, who is physically disqualified for any such effort, that it is his duty, while he remains under this physical disqualification, to go to distant lands as a missionary to the heathen. This would be against reason ; and we may add, it would be against right. Again, He will never impose a burden upon any one, which will conflict in any degree with

other burdens, which He has already imposed. This principle goes very far ; and is of frequent application. If, for instance, God sees fit to place us in situations of practical business, which demand great activity and effort, either physical or intellectual, he would not require that our minds should be agitated and borne down at the same moment, by fixing themselves with equal activity and power upon some other thing, even if it had the appearance of being more closely connected with religion. He does not, for instance, require us at one and the same time to till the soil, and to act the part of a public teacher. The two conditions of life, and the states of mind corresponding to them, especially when considered as existing at the same time, would be obviously inconsistent with each other and practically impossible. God knows this ; and He always acts in accordance with what He knows to be the true state of things. Accordingly, illustrating the principle by another instance, we may very properly say, I suppose, that it is always a duty to promote either directly or indirectly the revival of God's work in the hearts of men. But if it appear in view of the existing circumstances, that there are obvious and insuperable obstacles to a revival of religion in a particular place, He will direct the immediate and earnest attention of his people to these obstacles, rather than to the condition of those, needy and sinful though they be, who are ultimately to be benefitted by their removal. It is true, they will feel and feel deeply for sinning and impenitent persons. But they will perceive and feel

also, that there is an antecedent duty. And this becomes to them the appropriate burden; the present and the agonizing business of the time and the place. So that the earnest and deep cry of their hearts will be, not that the end may come before the beginning, but that the obstacles, which stand in the way of the end, may be removed, and that a way may be opened for the entrance of the Lord, and for his mighty works. And so of all other cases. It will always be found, that the burden of the Lord will be characterized by wisdom, and will be appropriate to the time, the place, and the circumstances.

6.—The burden of the Lord, even when in consequence of distinctly involving religious considerations and feelings, it may properly be called a spiritual burden, may be described, looking at it in other points of view, as either physical or intellectual. If it is physical, then it is something either to be physically done or physically endured. If it is intellectual, it is frequently, perhaps we may say generally, in the form either of strong grief or of strong desire. Whatever may be the form, in which it appears, it is generally attended with faith in some of its modifications. Sometimes, when it appears in the form of desire, and when God has determined to bring the particular thing which is desired to pass, it is attended with *specific* faith. Specific faith, (a subject which in consequence of its relations and results is one not to be lightly passed by,) is different from general faith in this particular, that it not only implies a general confidence in God as the hearer of prayer

but a specific confidence in Him as the hearer and answerer of the precise desire or request, which is now offered up to Him. In the exercise of this form of faith, we believe strongly, or perhaps it may be, that we believe beyond any doubt or question, that the precise thing, whatever it may be, which is the subject of our supplication, will be granted. There can hardly be a doubt, if we can rely upon the concurrent statement of many Christians, that specific faith, such as we have now represented it, sometimes exists. God is a sovereign in the dispensation of his gifts; and he may, from time to time, see reasons for imparting this form of faith, as well as any other.

7.—The exercises of mind in these cases are, in general, peculiar and striking; and they unquestionably require, if we would avoid mistakes and unhappy delusion, to be examined with great care. We have not reference in these remarks to those cases of specific faith, whatever they may be, which rest upon clear and precise declarations and promises of the Word of God. There are sometimes conjunctures in God's providences so remarkable, so clear, and the promises apply to them so readily and appropriately, that our faith in respect to them naturally assumes a specific form. The specific communication of faith, of which we are now speaking, seems to be in some sense an independent and extraordinary communication; as when, for instance, a person realizes a heavy burden of desire and supplication for the conversion of a friend, attended by a full belief, of the origin of which he can give no account

except that he supposes it to be the result of the special operations of the Holy Spirit, that this friend's conversion will take place. Cases of this kind, although there is ground for regarding them as one of the forms of Christian experience, are not very frequent. More generally God imposes a heavy burden of desire, supplication, and effort upon his people, without attending it with this form of faith. All the faith He imparts, in ordinary cases, is a general belief in Him, that He is present; that he hears our prayer; and that He will answer it, never in violation of his promises, but yet always in the manner He thinks best.

8.—We have much reason to think, that specific faith, when it is not false in its origin but is from God, will be followed by the thing or the result, which is believed in. Without saying any thing of its relation to the promises, it is hardly reasonable to suppose, that God would inspire such a faith, without having the purpose of fulfilment. At the same time it is proper to say, that this form of faith is sometimes counterfeited, and that the subjects of it are especially exposed to inward and dangerous delusions. Sometimes God sees fit, in the exercise of that distributive justice, which he is authorized and is bound to dispense, to leave persons to the perils and the evils of a false faith, existing in this particular form. It is said of certain persons, who received not the love of the truth, that God would “send them strong delusion, that they should *believe a lie*.”* This delusion is apt to exist in connection with

* 2d Thess. CH. 2: 11.

that strong and almost unsubmitive desire, which is closely allied both in its character and its dangers to self-will. Every desire, which is not from God, is the fruitful birth-place of error and of evil. Persons, who are the subjects of such desire, are apt to believe, not because they are authorized to do it by the promises, but simply because they have a strong desire, and because it is unpleasant to them to anticipate the disappointment of their desire.

“ Alas, we listen to our own fond hopes,
“ E'en till they seem no more our fancy's children;
“ We put them on a prophet's robe, endow them
“ With prophet's voices, and then Heaven speaks in them,
“ And that, which we would have be, surely shall be.

Under the influence of a strong delusion, which had its origin in strong desire, they have ascribed that desire to God, which had its origin in themselves; and believing that to be of divine origin, which was not of divine origin, have had faith in a falsehood.

9.—Such cases, although not very frequent, are still not uncommon. Individuals, of some piety and of strong natural passions, have from time to time announced themselves, as being the subjects of a specific faith. And when this faith, whatever may be the origin of it, exists in a high degree, it indicates itself by specific and confident predictions of the certain result of the things believed in. Some of these cases have been characterized at first by apparent signatures and evidences of the truth, although the result has clearly shown, that they involved some delusion, or at least

some misconception. Such cases do not necessarily imply a want of piety ; they only show that there may be piety, and sometimes even great piety in connection with more or less of human passion and human or Satanic delusion.

10.—A soul, that is fully devoted to God, is always in a position promptly and heartily to receive whatever burden God imposes. In that burden, whatever may be its nature, it realizes the answer to its own earnest prayer, viz. What wilt thou have me to do ? If it be to act, it acts promptly and believingly ; if it be to suffer, it suffers patiently ; if it be to pray, it prays with sincerity and faith. Among other things, such a soul will often be found offering its supplications specifically for others. I am aware, that specific supplications for others, especially when called forth by a particular request, have sometimes been objected to ; as if there were too much of the human and too little of the divine in their origin. But this depends, independently of the supplicant's state of mind, chiefly upon the circumstances of the case. God exists in his providences, as truly as he exists any where. And if God's providences clearly bring before us a certain individual, and present him as the appropriate subject of our supplications, that combination of circumstances constitutes a call from God ; and that call imposes a duty upon us, which, as God's people, we can neither shake off nor evade. We will suppose, that the providential indication is nothing more than this. A person, (no matter who he is, he may be little known to us, he may be a

friend or an enemy, he may be rich or poor,) meets us and requests us with every mark of sincerity to pray for him. Such a request, if there be nothing otherwise to sustain it, ought to be regarded as a call from God. And being so regarded, we are to look upon it as constituting the burden, which he then and there imposes. And we say this, because God has established humanity, all its facts, all its incidents, and all its relations; and he does not allow, and cannot allow any man to turn away with indifference or neglect from the humble and proper requests of his fellow man. If, therefore, a man asks us to pray for him, and does it with marks of sincerity, we *must* pray for him, and pray for him as an *individual*; otherwise we offend God, who can never see the claims, resulting from the mutual relationship of man with man, violated with impunity.

11.—And when we pray specifically for others under such circumstances, or under any other circumstances which indicate to us God's will, we may always regard ourselves as praying with a degree of divine encouragement. God never calls us to duty, without promising, at least by implication, if not in a manner specific and express, that he will aid us in the discharge of it. If in the request of our fellow-men to pray for them *specifically*, we recognize the call of God speaking in his providences, as we always ought to recognize it, we may be assured, that God will not leave us; but will grant to us the aid of his Holy Spirit, if we feel our need of it and ask it. And if this be true, the diffi-

culty, which exists in the minds of some persons, will be fully met. Our prayer becomes, what it ever ought to be, a gift of God, originated under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

12.—Perhaps the difficulty, to which we have had reference in some of these remarks, will be the better understood, if we introduce here one of the letters of Antonia Bourignon, which we do the more readily, because her writings, sometimes exceptionable but generally full of interest and instruction, are now but seldom met with. It is as follows.

* Sir.—You would know, why I am not desirous, that any should *recommend themselves to my prayers*. The reason is, because the soul that would be united unto God, ought to forget all created things, and to have no image or remembrance of things perishing, but to empty and purify itself of all sorts of sensible and visible objects, that the Soul being pure and naked may genuinely receive the Ideas and Impressions which the Holy Spirit pleases to communicate and manifest unto it, without any operation of its own. For if the Memory offers to it persons for whom it should pray, then it is not empty to receive the Holy influences; these images and this remembrance proving hinderances and interruptions to it: However it can never be without charity for its neighbor: on the contrary the nearer it approaches unto God, the greater is the good-will it hath for Man; but this is of such a Nature as to be no in-

* Light risen in Darkness, Pt. 1. Letter 12.

terruption to its Union with God. For there being in the Soul an affection for the good of its Neighbor, and God when he enters finding this affection there, does second it, and grant all its desires ; for He cannot refuse any thing to the Soul which loves him ; the wishes of such a Soul are the desires of God, without any other Prayer but the motions that he sees in the Soul. He grants all its desires, moving them himself. I know not if you will understand me well, this being very inward. Leaving it unto your Meditations I remain, Sir,—Your most humble Servant, Antonia Bourignon.

13.—There is undoubtedly important truth at the bottom of some of the remarks in this letter. The reader, who is acquainted with the history of ecclesiastical opinions, will probably recognize in them the old Mystic doctrine, that the soul must become a “*TABULA RASA*,”* a tablet without inscription, a canvass without line or color upon it, in order to experience the divine union. That is to say, we must be divested of every thought, which is not of divine inspiration, and of every feeling, which is not in harmony with God, in order to be in God without any thing intervening or separating. And it is undoubtedly true, as a general doctrine, that, the freer the soul is from the images of human things and the more exempt from human prejudice and passion, the more direct, the more easy, and the more intimate and deep, will be its communion with the Infinite Mind.

* See *L'Esprit de La Vie par Anthoine de Rojas*, Pt. II. ch. 17

But it ought to be remembered, that God will meet us in his creatures, as well as in his own essence. He is not, as some would seem to regard him, a great Being, shut up in the idle seclusion of some distant locality ; but a God every where present, and in a certain sense every where in-dwelling. If we think of his creatures, dwell upon them, and love them out of God, then they divide us from God. But this is not the case, if we see God in them. And so, if we regard events as events merely, and attach ourselves to them as such, they separate us from God ; but if we regard them as providences, as occurrences having God in them, then, so far from having a tendency to separate, they may be made the means of uniting us to him. We say, therefore, in reference to the illustrations on this subject which we have already introduced, that it is God himself, who dwells in his providences, and who speaks in his providences, and who, by means of his providences, continually calls us to sympathize with himself, by sympathizing with the creatures he has made. And we may add further, that the highest communion with God is that, which implies the closest union with his will. And, accordingly, if God by his providences indicates to us, that we should take a special interest in the religious welfare of our fellow-men, we never can possess true communion with him, we never can enjoy the tokens of his approbation and love, without first complying with this requisition. The truth is, that no prayer for others, no labors in the spread of the Gospel, nothing which is done at his bid-

ding, if it is done for the honor of his name, can ever, in itself considered, be at variance with the highest enjoyment of him.

14.—At the same time we may well rejoice in those seasons in his Providences, when he permits us to think of him and to rejoice in him, *in himself considered*. Seasons, when the world is withdrawn from our thoughts ; when the objects of the world cease to entice and enlist our affections. No sight is seen, which catches away the eye of the mind ; no sound is heard, which divides the attention of the mental ear ; no object is present to the perceptions, and no image of any thing out of God remains upon the memory ; but the soul, united with God in its separation from every thing else, knows him and rejoices in him alone. That is the day and the hour of great and good things, when the world is shut out, that heaven may be shut in ; when all creatures, both as objects to be thought of, and as objects to be enjoyed, are absent, in order that God, entering into a habitation from which every evil and unpropitious thing is removed, may enter and dwell there as the one great object, which occupies the whole capacity of thought and the whole sphere of the affections.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

ON THE RELATION OF FAITH TO THE STATE OF CONTINUAL PRAYER.

The state of continual prayer recognized in the Scriptures, and in writers on christian experience. The state of continual prayer does not necessarily imply vocal or discursive prayer. The state of continual prayer involves the existence of a permanent disposition, rather than of a mere act or succession of acts. Continual prayer implies continual desire. Continual desire implies continual faith. Of some practical applications of this state of mind. Of the happiness connected with it.

ON a certain occasion the Savior spake a parable to this end, that "*men ought always to pray.*"* "*Pray without ceasing,*" says the Apostle. "In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."† The state of continual prayer is the true state of the christian. Certain it is, that we find such a state fully recognized not only in the Scriptures, but in many devout writers on christian experience. "A christian," says Antonia Bourignon,

* Luke, 18: 1.

† 1st. Thess. 5: 17, 18.

"is obliged to pray *always* ; not merely in the church, but at all times and in all places. Such a prayer consists essentially in the elevation of the soul to God, and in union with him in the exercise of love. So that the mind may be in that state, which constitutes continual prayer or prayer without ceasing, even while we walk and work, eat and drink, and even while one is at rest. In our sleep our affections and will ought to be in such a state, that we may regard them as blessing God always." *

2.—In saying that the true state of the christian is that of continual prayer, it is hardly necessary to add, that we do not mean *vocal* prayer, which requires a physical effort, and which, therefore, the laws of our physical nature render it impossible continually to present. Nor do we mean what is sometimes termed *discursive* prayer ; that is to say, a prayer, which, whether vocal or mental, specifies successively the different subjects of supplication, and which, therefore, implies and requires successive acts of perception, of comparison, and deduction. The mind, as well as the body, requires rest. And any acts of the mind, which imply effort, as all discursive acts do, must cease and must give the mind rest, after a time. It is true, that continual prayer implies the existence of such discursive acts to some extent ; it is not unreasonable to suppose, that they may make, and that they do make,

* See the Light of the World, Pt. I. Conference X, as compared with Conf. XIV.

from time to time, a part of it; but they do not, and cannot *constitute it*.

3.—The state of continual prayer may be regarded, as it seems to us, as something more than a mental act or exercise, and something more than even a succession of such acts or exercises. We do not mean to say, that continual prayer is either necessarily or actually inconsistent with specific and separate acts, with such acts as we may properly speak of as being separate and distinct subjects of notice in our consciousness. On the contrary, it often implies and includes them; but still in its *essence*, in that which makes it what it is, it is obviously something more. In other words, and perhaps more specifically, the mind in continual prayer is the mind concentrated and fixed in one position, in one attitude; that is to say, it is the mind, not merely in an act or exercise, which appears and disappears, which may come and go in a moment; but is in that fixed and permanent state, which may properly be described as a *disposition*; a disposition, resulting from the operation of the Holy Spirit, and which is sustained in that permanency or continuity, which is characteristic of dispositions, by the constant in-dwelling of the same divine agent.

4.—It will aid us somewhat in the understanding of what has been said, when we remark further, that continual prayer implies continual DESIRE. As it is self-evident, that there cannot be prayer without desire, so it is equally clear, that there cannot be continual prayer without continual desire. Another remark, which fol-

lows in connection with what has just been stated, is, that continual desire implies, and that it must necessarily imply, an object continually present before the mind. Desire without an object to which it relates, desire without an object which is desired, is obviously a natural impossibility. Continual prayer, therefore, implies not only a continual desire, but also a permanent or continual *object* of desire. And we may remark further, that there is but one object, which is appropriate to this state of mind, and which at the same time is characterized by perpetuity. The appropriate object of that continual desire, which is involved in every case of continual prayer, is the *fulfilment of God's blessed will*. The one great desire of the heart, which experiences this prayer, is, *THY WILL BE DONE*. To that will, it steadily looks; and in its fulfilment alone can it be satisfied. As the will of God is never discontinued but is eternal as God himself is, we have thus a perpetual foundation laid of the permanency, the perpetuity, the everlastingness, if we may so express it, of this accepted and ennobling desire. And consequently we have a foundation for that state of mind, which we may properly designate as the state of continual prayer.

5.—There is another principle, involved in the analysis of this deeply interesting subject, which should not be omitted. It is a principle, which we think will commend itself to every reflecting mind, as a true one. It is this. The desire, which is involved in continual prayer, must not only have an object; but such are the laws of the mind's action, that, before desire can be

exercised, we must *believe in the object, as a thing suitable to be desired*. In other words, we must have faith in God's will as holy, just, and good. It would be a natural impossibility, or perhaps we should rather say, it would be a mental or psychological impossibility, to desire the fulfilment of God's will, without faith in its fulfilment as a thing desirable. And it is in this way, that, by an immutable law of mental action, a law which is obviously recognized in the dispensations of divine grace, we connect the state of continual prayer with that of continual faith. Faith here, as every where else, is the basis, the foundation.

6.—And we may add, when we have continual faith, we naturally and necessarily have that great result, in the form of continual prayer, to which our attention is now directed. The one involves the other. Desire, when directed to God, constitutes the essence of prayer. And accordingly if we continually believe in God's will as holy, just, and good, and in the fulfilment of that will *as a thing to be desired*, the desire of its fulfilment will exist, and will exist continually, as a matter of course. It is no more a matter of contingency, than that God is contingent. Faith in a thing desirable, considered as desirable for us in our situation, is followed with a desire of the thing by a law as certain as the laws of the physical world; even more certain, because physical laws may be altered or annulled, but that of faith, considered in relation to the results which we are now contemplating, never has changed, never will change. We cannot help noticing here, how in-

fallibly the results of inward christian experience, when traced back to their source, all terminate in the same central feeling; all going to show the truth of the scripture declaration, that "THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." And we anticipate the time with emotions of pleasure and thankfulness, when faith in God through Christ shall be universally understood and proclaimed as the true basis, whether we consider the subject philosophically or scripturally, both of the inward and outward life.

7.—He, who is in the state of continual prayer, continually lives and acts for God. The state of continual prayer, as we have already had occasion to notice, is a fixed state, a *disposition*; it is the affections going out to God and attached to him, in consequence of faith being at the bottom of it, by a permanent law; it is the heart, which is man's moral centre, praying wholly and praying always. Such a prayer, therefore, necessarily commands the outward life. It is impossible to separate them. With a heart, that is continually praying, there is, and must be a life continually acting; the one corresponding to the other. If speaking is action, and if it is true, as the Savior expresses it, that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," then it will be found equally true, that the hands, and feet, and every thing which is instrumental in and makes a part of man's outward activity, will speak continually, in their own mode of utterance, out of the same abundance. If we would know, therefore, whether our heart is continually praying, we may reason from effect

to cause, and infer an answer from the greater or less holiness of our lives.

8.—Continual prayer is a state of mind, which is not only adapted to our relations with God, relations which are permanent and unchangeable ; but to those outward and incidental relations, which characterize our present state. And hence we may properly speak of it as man's true state. He, who prays always, is safe always ; and if he prays in faith, not only faith in God as the *object* of prayer, but faith in God as the *giver* and *answerer* of prayer, I think we may say, in the evangelical, if not in the legal sense of the terms, that he is *right* always. In whatever his hand finds to do, God approves him. And in connection with what has just been said, we may remark, that one advantage of the state of continual prayer, considered in its relation to the present outward life, is that it is not only exercised at all times, but is adapted to all employments and all occasions. He, who thus prays, is not taken by surprise. He does not say, in the manner of those who fall into this or that error, into this or the other sin, I neglected to pray, I did not look to God, and I am now reaping the consequences of it. Prayer keeps him from the consequent, because it keeps him from the antecedent. He, who thus prays, glorifies God *moment by moment* ; wherever he goes, and whatever he does, whether in the place of retirement, or in the place of public action, or in whatever other diversities of situation Providence has seen fit to place him. He meets all occasions in a proper manner, because he

always meets them in the divine relation. He always meets them rightly, because he meets them under God's eye and with a humble and dependent reference to God's guidance and approbation.

9.—Sometimes in the view of particular or specific objects, the mind, which is in the state of continual prayer, prompted by the intimations of a divine and ever present providence, assumes at once the attitude or rather perhaps the act of specific prayer. It prays for the poor, the sick, the tempted, the impenitent, specifying their circumstances, and perhaps calling them by name ; it prays for a father, a son, a friend, an enemy, for the church general or the church particular, or for any other object, which God in his providence presents or which is calculated to embody the feeling of intercessional desire. This statement will help to illustrate some of the statements already made, namely, that continual prayer is not inconsistent with specific acts, but that it often includes them, and that it is adapted to every situation. At the same time it should always be remembered, as a thing necessary in making out the philosophy of continual prayer, that under this specific and comparatively outward prayer which attaches itself to the known and the visible, there is continuously with it another prayer, still deeper or still higher in the soul, which attaches itself to the unknown and the invisible ; a prayer real and permanent although not always uttered with the lips ; a prayer in which God delights, and in which he has his throne of

thrones ; the prayer, "NOT MY WILL, OH GOD, BUT THINE BE DONE."

10.—The state of continual prayer is a truly happy state. It might be thought to be otherwise, because such prayer involves the state of continual desire ; and desire, so long as it is ungratified, so long as some uncertainty attaches to the possession or fulfilment of its object, is always more or less painful. But those, who experience the state of continual prayer, not only always desire, but always experience continuously with the desire the *fulfilment* of the desire. Their leading desire, their leading prayer, that which overtops, if we may so express it, and embraces all other prayer, is, that *God's will may be done*. The faith in the truth and excellence of God's character, which lays the foundation of this continual prayer, as we have already seen, is a faith perpetual, a faith undoubting. This faith, which believes in God's will, as holy, just, and good, never admits the suspicion of any uncertainty or contingency in relation to its fulfilment. When the moment of fulfilment comes, he, who continually prays, having a faith, both in continuance and strength equal to the desire involved in his prayer, knows that the fulfilment, whatever it may be, is such as to glorify God, and therefore he bows to it in submission and thankfulness. He may feel a sorrow in view of it, considered in certain relations, for instance, when he sees impenitent sinners falling under it into dreadful ruin ; (the Savior himself was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, not only on his own account but on account

of others ;) but this grief, often sharp and painful to the natural sensibilities, is counterbalanced in the inner and higher life, and is annulled, and even turned into peaceful acquiescence and thankfulness, when the event, however painful it may be in some of its aspects, is considered in its relation to God's glory and the ultimate good of the universe. So that we may say with entire confidence, that he, who prays continually, inasmuch as this sublime prayer is sustained by a faith of the highest kind, cannot now, and cannot ever, so long as the soul continues in this state, be wanting in the elements of the highest happiness. And this may be said especially, among other things, because he, who continually prays, has the privilege, a privilege so marked and eminent, that we cannot well conceive of a greater one, of always rejoicing in the presence and in-dwelling of the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

THE RELATION OF THE PRESENT MOMENT TO THE REVELATION OF GOD'S WILL.

Of the relation of the will of God to the life of faith. Of the difficulty in ascertaining the divine will. The will of God two-fold, general and specific. The particular or specific will of God known in connection with his providences. His providences known moment by moment. He, who lives rightly, lives moment by moment. References to the Scriptures. Inferences from this subject.

HE, who seeks to walk in the way of faith, and who, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, really walks and lives in the truth and essence of that better way, has virtually, and perhaps we may say, has really ceased from all natural desires. That is to say, NATURE, which was once the source of action, has become GRACE; and all the desires of nature are fulfilled in the one and comprehensive desire of fulfilling the will of God. The will of God may be said to be the sphere, the element in which the truly believing and holy man exists.

2.—This, we may reasonably suppose, is sufficiently obvious. The whole operation of the Spirit of God in the human soul may be resolved into two things; first,

to make known the will of God, second, to unite us to that will. Nevertheless, it is a remark not unfrequently made, that we are ignorant, in a multitude of cases, what the will of God is ; and that our disposition to do his will is rendered ineffectual by our want of knowledge. This view, which is so frequently presented as to require notice, will be found to be less plausible on examination, than it is at first sight.

3.—It is proper to remark, in the first place, that the will of God may be regarded in a two-fold aspect, viz., as general and specific. We take it for granted, that all persons, who are truly interested in the cause of religion, harmonize, in a considerable degree, with what may be called the general features of God's will. They may be said, in the general sense of the terms, to love his cause, to desire its advancement, and to wish well to the various benevolent movements that are subordinate to its advancement. But it is very obvious that something more than this,—that much more than this,—is wanted to constitute a holy character. In order to constitute such a character, it is necessary that our desires should correspond with the purposes of God, as they are developed in *particulars*. Every requisition, which our heavenly Father makes upon us, even to the moving of a finger, must be met with a harmonious consent on our part. In relation to the obedient and sanctified heart, it can truly be said, that God dwells within ; but it seems to us to be equally true, that he reveals himself there, only in connection with the *facts of the present moment*. The slightest

discord between our souls and the will of God, as developed and interpreted in his *momentarily occurring providences*, is a discord, a want of harmony, between our souls and God himself.

4.—The question then arises, How shall we know the will of God specifically or in particular cases? The answer, which we propose as a satisfactory one to a considerable extent, is, that God always meets us with a specific revelation of his will in the events or providences of the present moment. In other words, the events of God's providence, just so far as they give us information at all, are to be regarded as an expression of his will. And so far as they do not give us information of themselves, they furnish a basis of information, which may be deduced from them. Taken in connection with what he has revealed, they give us all the facts which are necessary to us. And the decision, which we make in view of them, if our hearts are fully consecrated to God and if we look for his guidance in true faith, will necessarily be a decision which the divine will approves. In other words, *it will be the divine will to us*. God will assuredly accept us, if in the exercise of a humble and strong faith we seek to be guided, in view of the facts which his providence presents.

5.—It will be seen at once, that this view gives a great importance to the present moment. It is obvious, that the facts of God's providence, which have relation to a particular course of conduct, cannot be fully developed till the moment of taking that course arrives,

the precise moment of action, the *present* moment. Consequently we are not at liberty to pronounce what the will of God is, in relation to such course of action, until the present moment, as we may conveniently designate the precise period of action, has come. In order to know what is right and duty, we must have ALL the facts; but no moment, antecedent to the *present* moment, or the precise moment of action, can give them. We cannot tell to-day absolutely what may be our duty to-morrow, because we have not as yet all the facts which God's providence will lay before us, and which are obviously necessary to the foundation of an absolute or positive judgment. When the time *comes*, as already intimated, we shall have all the facts before us. And although we may have approximated a decision before, in other words may have formed a probable opinion from the light we had, it is evident that we must decide absolutely and permanently what duty is, *at the very moment when duty is to be performed*. And duty, it is obvious, is only another expression for the will of God.

6.—It is hardly necessary to say here, that the doctrine which has been laid down, when it is rightly understood, is in accordance with numerous passages of Scripture. "Take, therefore," says the Savior, "no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." The passages of Scripture, which require us to watch,

appear not only to involve, but to have a special reference to the facts of the present moment. "Watch thou *in all things*," says the Apostle to Timothy. "My soul waiteth for the Lord," says the Psalmist, "more than they that watch for the morning." "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," says Solomon. That is to say, give your whole power to the accomplishment of whatever God in his providence now places before you. And he gives a reason; "for there is no work, nor desire, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest."

7.—In view of what has been said, we proceed to make a number of remarks. And we observe, in the first place, that one practical result of the principles which have been laid down, is, that we should not be over confident in the expression of opinions on things which are partly future. It is evident from what has been said, that, in ordinary cases of human conduct, we cannot pronounce positively what the will of God is, until the moment of specific action to which the will of God relates, and which it is destined to direct, shall actually arrive. This is a state of things, which has the obvious advantage of being opposed to self-confidence and rash judgments, and of being favorable to forbearance, charity, and humility. Hence it is that very holy men, in a multitude of cases, defer their judgments; while others, who are less holy, are prompt in deciding. The first class of persons, it is true, see the light dawning; God is gradually giving them intimations of what his will is likely to be; but they are

kept in the posture of childlike indecision, of humble waiting and inquiry, and cannot say that they know any thing with positive certainty of the personal duties that are before them, until the arrival of the decisive moment, the moment of action, the moment in God's unalterable providence, which brings with it developments that no other moment ever did or can.

8.—We observe again, it is a result of the doctrine which has been laid down, to keep men steady in their position in life ; we mean, in that position in which God's providence has placed them. In the order of that divine and beautiful providence, (a providence which, though revealed in time, had its origin in eternity, and was born from infinite wisdom,) there can hardly be a doubt in the mind of him to whom God is all in all, that every moral being, whether high or low, has his talent, his vocation, and his place. Too often the natural mind, inflated with self-conceit, and rendered rebellious by selfishness, is dissatisfied with what God has given it, and is restless also in the position in which God has placed it. It has not a "single eye," looking ever to the pole star of God's will ; but it sees things distorted and double, and is driven about hither and thither, in the "multiplicity" (that is to say, amid the multiplied, and generally conflicting and false motives,) of the life of SELF. Such a person is always changing. But he, who lives in the divine moment, stands firm. However poor, suffering, and unhonored he may be, he is willing to wait patiently where he is, till the moment of God, written over with the words

and inscriptions of his holy providence, reveals to the interpreting eye of the inward light the divine order of his departure.

9.—In view of the principles which have been advanced, we make another remark, viz., that we are not at liberty to attach ourselves strongly to *plans* of action. By a plan of action we understand a general course of action, which will embrace many particulars. We are at liberty, from time to time, to form such plans. But it is obvious that the ability to carry them into execution depends upon the developments of God's providence, step by step, and moment by moment. God's providence may reveal to us that it is agreeable to his will that we should form a plan; but his providence does not reveal to us that we shall have life and ability to carry it into effect in its successive particulars, until the times or periods of fulfilling those particulars successively arrive. We enter upon the prosecution of the plan, therefore, knowing nothing as to its ultimate fulfilment, except as God shall show his will and give us ability in the successive steps of its progress. God may stop us at any one moment, and he may have good reasons for so doing, however far we may have advanced. Therefore, we ought to sit loosely to every thing, except the present moment. We ought not to permit our affections to become enlisted, as they are very apt to be. We should enter upon the plan in accordance with God's will; we should advance step by step in accordance with his will; and without the least emotion of disappointment or displeasure, we should

stop in accordance with his will ; which we cannot well do, if we let our affections go in advance of the divine moment, which is the present moment, and cleave to objects which have not as yet received the divine sanction.

10.—We see, further, that the doctrine of “LIVING BY THE MOMENT,” which is the doctrine generally adopted by persons who have had deep experience in holy living, has a real and permanent foundation and ought to be universally received and put in practice. No man lives well, who lives out of the will of God. No man lives in the will of God, who anticipates the divine moment or moment of actual duty, by making up a positive decision before it arrives, or by delaying a decision until after its departure. We must meet God there, and stand in his will there, or meet him nowhere, and stand out of his will every where. If, therefore, we would live in the will of God, we must conform to that beautiful and sacred order, in which his will is made known. In other words, if it is our sincere desire to live in the divine will, it seems to follow that we must live by the moment.

11.—This doctrine keeps the mind fixed to God alone. Every moment presents our blessed Maker before us, with the facts of his providence all arranged and convergent to one point, and requiring of us as moral agents a prompt decision. God is in that moment as it arrives ; his unseen presence is embodied in that small point of time ; he speaks to us in the still small voice ; if we hear and reply with correspondent

heart and action, it is well ; if we do not listen and obey, he is gone from us ; and an eternity to come cannot remedy the loss of that one moment. This doctrine not only keeps the mind fixed to God alone, but it makes us place our happiness in God alone. Standing in the will of God as our true position, and adopting the will of God as our true and only guide, we cannot look for happiness any where else if we would. And if we were at liberty to do it, no where else should we find it.

12.—Finally, it is a result of the principles which have been laid down when they are put in practice, that they preserve us from the very considerable evil, (certainly a considerable evil in its bearings on holiness of life,) of *reflex acts of mind* ; that is to say, of frequent and unnecessary returns of the mind upon itself, in the form of self-inquiry, of self-condemnation or of self-gratulation, and in other ways which might be mentioned. This result seems to follow from the fact that, on the system of living by the moment, the mind always has before itself a present object, and that the object fully occupies and absorbs the mind, *because God himself is present in it*. I presume it is a reasonable supposition, that the minds of angels and other holy beings in another state of existence are free, to a considerable extent, from such reflex acts as have been referred to. They have no disposition, in their present state of feeling, to be looking back on the past either in the way of self-condemnation, or of self-gratulation, or even of self-inquiry. To be frequently thinking even

of their holiness, by means of reflex acts which would necessarily turn them away from the contemplation of God's blessed will, would be equally dangerous and unnatural. Their faces, therefore, are turned continually in one direction ; their motion is continually onward ; like the mystic beings of the vision of Ezekiel, of whom it is said, " They turned not when they went ; they every one went straight forward." And such, it is reasonable to suppose, was the case with Jesus Christ in his humanity. His meat and drink was, not to think about himself and his feelings, but to do the will of his heavenly Father ; not to think how holy he was, but *to be holy*. His heart, his whole being, was consolidated to one object. This is the necessary law of truly holy beings, because the divine moment, considered as not yet called into existence, is always in advance, always before and not behind us ; and when in God's order it rises up to the surface, and reveals itself from the outspread ocean of coming time, it always occupies the whole thought and feeling. God is there : and, therefore, the soul that is given to God is there ; and there it finds enough to occupy it, to fill it. Thus, on the principles which have been laid down, it is hardly possible, in the case of a truly holy soul, that there should be any looking back. Such a soul is disburdened alike of the world without and the world within. It is " simplified," made ready, and girded for action. It looks towards God and God alone, and its movement is upward, onward, and unchangeable.

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

ON THE RELATION OF FAITH TO PRAYER FOR THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL.

The spread of the Gospel takes place in connection with prayer. Prayer for the spread of the Gospel always preceded and attended by faith. Illustrations of this view. Of faith in its relation to the results of this form of prayer. Remarks on the value of this form of faith. Of the operation of the Holy Spirit.

THE subject of this chapter is a trite one. It is frequently the theme, as it ought to be, of the pulpit ; and is, therefore, too well understood to require extended remarks. The progress of the Gospel, including not merely its announcement in various parts of the world but all those propitious influences which naturally attend upon its announcement, is one of the great objects, to which the thoughts and affections of the christian world strongly attach themselves. But such is the obvious arrangement of God's providences, as we find them developed in the light of observation and experience, as well as in the Scriptures, that we speak only the universal sentiment on the subject, when we say,

that this progress does not exist, and cannot exist, without being preceded and attended with prayer. The moment that prayer ceases, all effort in behalf of the missionary cause ceases ; missionary schools are closed ; missionary churches are laid in ruins ; missionary stations are abandoned. If prayer without corresponding effort is vain, it is not the less true, that effort without prayer, especially in such a cause, is equally vain.

2.—To pray without *believing*, when we use the term *belief* in the full extent of its applications, is an impossibility. In other words, there is, and from the nature of the case there must be, more or less of belief, in some of its modifications, in every case of prayer. The proposition is an universal one. Whatever may be the object, which calls forth our supplications, faith is always at the bottom. In praying, for instance, for the spread of the Gospel, it is obvious, that we pray for it on the ground, that the Gospel has a *remedial or healing efficacy*. And this implies, that we believe in the first place, that there are persons to be healed. Annul the fact of belief in this respect, unimportant as this modification of faith may seem, and you necessarily annul the form of prayer, of which we are now speaking. What motive have we, or can we have for praying, that the Gospel may be preached in all lands, if we have no belief, that man is a fallen being, that he has gone astray into paths of rebellion, and that he truly needs a Savior ? We have already had occasion to say, in a former chapter, that desire is an element,

involved in all prayer. On this point, there is, and can be, as I suppose, but one opinion. But how can we desire, that the Gospel may every where be announced as the true and only effectual remedy of moral evils, when we do not believe, that such evils exist? Looking at the subject in this aspect, therefore, it is exceedingly clear, that we cannot pray for the spread of the Gospel without faith.

3.—Another remark, which may properly be made, is, that the strength, the fervor of our prayer, will be in proportion, other things being equal, to our belief in the *degree* of the moral and physical evil, which is to be corrected. And this view explains, in part, the too great apathy of the christian world, in relation to the progress of the Gospel. They believe the condition of heathen nations to be a sad one; but there is reason to think, that they do not generally believe it to be so exceedingly deplorable, as it actually is. There is reason to fear, that there is much skepticism on this subject among ministers and churches of all denominations of christians; not an unbelief that the heathen need the Gospel, but a secret perplexity and doubt *as to the actual extent of that need*. And hence, although they have a degree of faith, they do not have a faith adequate to the occasion. They have faith enough to enable them to pray; but they do not, as a general thing, have faith enough to enable them to pray *ferently*. They do not believe, as they ought to believe. They do not believe, as the primitive christians and

preachers believed. They do not believe, as the Apostle Paul believed, who gave his time, his worldly interests, his reputation, his life, to the cause of missions.

4.—Again, we cannot pray for the spread of the Gospel as the remedy of moral evils, without believing, not merely that such evils exist, but also that the Gospel is the appropriate source of relief. “It is a saying worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ *came into the world to save sinners.*” “Behold the Lamb of God, who *taketh away the sins of the world.*” “Ye were as *sheep going astray*, but now are *returned to the shepherd and bishop of your souls.*” If we do not believe in these propositions or in others, involving the same import, namely, that Jesus Christ is the appropriate and effectual remedy for the world’s moral evils, we do not pray, and cannot pray for the spread of the Gospel, *considered as the remedy of sin.* If we do not believe in it as a remedy, such are the laws of the mind, that it is impossible for us to pray for it as a remedy. We may have the other forms of belief, which have been referred to; but we shall not pray for the progress of the Gospel, without this form of faith in addition to them.

5.—But this is not all. It is possible to desire the spread of the Gospel without praying for it. But it should be remembered, that simple desire is no substitute and no compensation for prayer. Prayer is not merely desire; but it is desire **ADDRESSED TO GOD.** It is the recognition of God as the source of consolation and hope, which distinguishes prayer from simple de-

sire. It is possible, therefore, to desire, but it is not possible to *pray*, without first believing that God *is*, and that he is the "*rewarder of all those, who diligently seek him.*" We must believe in God *as God*, which involves the fact that he is supreme and that he listens to the supplications of all those who put their trust in him, before we can pray. So that, looking at the subject in this point of view also, we again come to the result, which has already been repeatedly indicated, namely, that *prayer for the spread of the Gospel necessarily implies faith.*

6.—We proceed to remark further, that there are special commands and special promises, which have relation to the spread of the Gospel. And this is not all. The whole economy of Revelation, from beginning to end and in every part of it, involves, as it seems to us, the pleasing and great idea, that the Gospel, which was but a grain of mustard seed in its commencement, will expand itself in every direction, will demolish every religious doctrine which is antagonistical in its principle, and will finally leave but one opinion, but one desire, one universally acknowledged way of salvation, and one great object, which really constitutes salvation in its result, namely, an union of the soul with God, accomplished by perfect harmony of will. This is the broad and cheering promise of the Bible, embodied in specific commands, in specific promises, and in the whole plan and progress of Revelation. And it is by faith in this great promise especially, that the prayer for the progress of the Gospel is now sustained,

and will be more abundantly sustained in ages yet to come.

7.—The office of faith can hardly be said to be accomplished in what precedes prayer. Faith goes before, and it follows after. It not only lays the foundation for that form of prayer which we are now considering, viz. for the spread of the Gospel, but it has the effect to inspire a suitable disposition in regard to the result. The strong desire for the progress of the Gospel and for the conversion of the world, which is involved in adequate prayer for that object, would be likely to render us uneasy and fretful, were it not attended by faith that the result, and the *whole* result, will come in God's time. The doctrine of faith, in its relation to our belief in God as the fulfiller of his promises, includes not only the fulfilment of the thing promised, but the *manner* of its fulfilment, and the *time* of its fulfilment. And all faith, which does not include these, is exceedingly liable to be interrupted, shaken, and weakened. Faith says, in relation to events future; "BE PATIENT, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." And again it is said, "Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." Men may pray much for the spread of the Gospel; they may sanction their prayers by unwearied efforts; but if they have not that faith, which will lead them calmly and thankfully to permit God to fulfil their desires in his own time and way, they fall far short of the higher degrees and the more excellent results of this christian grace.

8.—I think we have seen some illustrations of what has just been said in our own day. Within the short period of half a century efforts have been made for the spread of the Gospel and for the general progress of humanity, such as have seldom been witnessed in any previous periods. The principles of toleration have been established ; the methods of civil government have been improved ; the bonds of the slave have been partially sundered ; the spirit of war has been broken ; the claims of universal brotherhood, the claims of man upon man, simply because *he is man*, begin to be more generally recognized ; and above all, the Gospel, which is the secret source of these favorable results, is on its rapid way to every land, to every dwelling place. And yet there are some persons, to whom nothing or almost nothing seems to be done, because it is evident, that much remains to be done ; and who, in the spirit of distrust and impatience, seem almost ready to abandon the cause of humanity, because God, who sees the end from the beginning, is accomplishing his own work in his own time. This state of things, just so far as it exists, is not only an inconvenience, but a sin. A sin, which is the natural result of short-sighted and selfish views, but which can never exist in connection with full faith in God.

9.—Believe in God. Believe in all that God has promised either expressly or impliedly. And then, in the exercise of faith, pray to him ; for you cannot pray to him, without first believing in him. And then add effort to prayer. Effort is the necessary incident to all

true supplication. But having prayed in faith, and having added to supplication all appropriate and reasonable effort, the doctrine of faith requires us to leave the result with entire confidence, that God will do all things well. Friends may disappear, and opposers may multiply; obstacles, which were unexpected, may arise, and the time of fulfilment may seem to be rendered more and more remote; but the heart, that is strong in faith, reposes firmly and calmly, in the conviction, that the word of God can never fail.

10.—And I think we may properly add here, that of all the various forms or modifications of faith, there is none more pleasing to God than this. The belief in the fulfilment of an object, before the anticipated time of fulfilment has arrived, is indirectly but powerfully supported by the *anticipation itself*. In other words, it derives encouragement from the anticipated *nearness* of its fulfilment. But when that anticipation is disappointed, when the day comes without that which we expected to come with it, when the cloud is before us and over us, the cloud without its bright bow of promise, it is then that we are enabled, in the flight and failure of those from whom we had hoped better things, to separate between the false and the real, and to discriminate the small but accepted number of those, who have the true faith. A faith, built not upon what is seen, but upon what has been declared; not upon man's present estimate, but upon God's eternal veracity.

11.—The form of prayer, which we have been considering in this chapter, like all other prayer, has its

origin in a divine operation. If there were no inward Teacher, no Holy Ghost, and men were left to the inspirations of nature instead of the teachings of God in-dwelling, there would be no prayer for the heathen, as there would be no prayer for any thing else. But the operation of the Holy Ghost, in this case as in others, always has its appropriate time, its appropriate place, its appropriate conditions; constituting together its formulary or law of action. From this great law the inward Teacher never varies, because it is a law, always sustained, as it was conceived at first, in infinite wisdom. And accordingly, while we can say, that all true prayer, which is offered up for the spread of the Gospel, is originated by the Holy Spirit, it is still true, that such prayer never exists independently of faith. If this is not the whole law of the Spirit's action, it is certainly a part of it. God, who always regards the facts and relations of things, has seen fit in his wisdom to connect them together in such a manner as to make faith the permanent antecedent of prayer. The Holy Spirit, therefore, originates prayer; he inspires it within us; but he never acts arbitrarily. And if he never inspires the spirit of supplication, without first imparting the grace of faith, it is because he never violates, and never can violate, his own wise and unalterable law of action, either in whole or in part.

CHAPTER NINTH.

ON THE RELATION OF FAITH TO THE PRAYER OF RECOLLECTION.

Of the different names given to the state of mind under consideration. Of the value of the prayer of recollection. One result of this prayer is, that it makes God always present to the mind, as the central principle. Another is, that, in the exercise of strong faith, it recognizes in God a central position and a controlling influence in all events. Limited, in a great degree, to objects and events now present. Some of the results of this form of prayer. Its relation to the influences of the Holy Spirit. Characterized by outward silence.

AMONG the various forms of religious experience, there is a state of mind, which is variously described, sometimes as the state of Recollection, sometimes as the state of Inward Recollection, and which, as it seems to us, may otherwise be properly designated as the Prayer of Recollection. Certain it is, that it would not be difficult to find good authority for this form of expression in religious writers.

2.—Of the value of the prayer of RECOLLECTION, as one of the incidents and securities of growth in religion, we do not now propose particularly to speak. It does not appear to be necessary. In reading the

lives of truly devoted and holy men in different ages of the world, we often find the remark made, that they were *recollected*. And the remark is made in such a way as to imply, that the writer regarded the state of inward or religious recollection as incidental to the highest religious experience. It is exceedingly obvious, we think, without attempting to sustain the assertion by any extended remarks, that it is not possible for a person to devote himself to God in the highest sense of the terms, and to continue in intimate and holy communion with him for any length of time, without being in a religiously recollected state.

3.—One element of the prayer of recollection, one thing which helps to constitute its nature, is, that God is always mentally present to the mind in such a state. To be recollected, in the religious sense of the terms, is not merely by recalling the past, to exercise an act of remembrance ; is not merely, as some might naturally suppose, to remember or to recollect in the sense, which mental philosophy commonly attaches to those expressions. It is something different from this ; and in some respects nearly the opposite. It is to have the soul *collected in itself*. It is to restrain it from its earthly wanderings ; to give it power against inordinate and wrong attractions ; and to consolidate it around some centre. And that centre, it is hardly necessary to say, is God. So that to be recollected, in the religious sense of the terms, necessarily implies, in the first place and especially, a mental recognition of God's presence. That is to say, the thoughts and feelings,

instead of being divergent in every direction, running "like the eyes of the fool to the ends of the earth," are drawn in from the circumference, are *collected*, and all have reference to the central presence and the central influence.

4.—The principle, which has the wonderful power of thus restoring the soul to its true position, and of placing God in the centre, is Faith. It is the principle of faith, considered in its relation to the limited capacity of the human mind, which reveals the fact of the divine existence. That is to say, God, who is *infinite*, never can be made known to the human mind, which is *finite*, by a positive act of cognition ; and consequently can never be made known independently of an act of faith. And the same principle or power, which reveals God to the soul in the first instance, must keep him present to the soul in all time to come. It is by faith that he comes, and by faith that he is retained. Faith, whose influence in our religious nature, is every where felt, has the power to do this ; and no other principle, so far as we can perceive, independently of faith, either has it, or can have it. It is to those who believe and those only, that God is, and that he is always present as the central principle, around which the soul's thoughts and affections should congregate, and to which they are every moment responsible.

5.—In the prayer of Recollection, God is not only present as the central object in relation to our own thoughts and our own mental action ; but another element of this prayer is, that God *is made present by it*

in every event which takes place around us. This is a truth, namely, that God is the central element in *events*, which is not more easy to be received than that of the presence of God as the central element to the soul and the soul's thoughts and affections. I think we may say confidently, it is a truth which is never received, where there is not a *high degree of faith*. If God is not, in the immediate and absolute sense, the originator of all acts and all events, I suppose, it will generally be admitted, that he is in some sense *present* to all events, that he exercises over them a degree of control and direction, and that every thing, which takes place, exists either by his aid or by his permission. We are told, that not a sparrow falleth to the ground without God; and that the hairs of our heads are numbered.* God is present in all things. Such is the fact; a fact often rejected by the imperfection of human wisdom; but always received by those, whose wisdom is from above. So that he, who exercises the prayer of recollection, is sustained in it by a faith, which first places God in the midst of his own thoughts and affections; and then doubly encloses and shields itself with the divine presence by placing God in the centre of each event and of all events, which throng around it.

6.—Another remark proper to be made is, that the prayer of Recollection is *involuntary*, in a great degree, in respect to its object. It has no selection. What we mean is, that it is a state of mind *recollected*,

* Mat. 10: 29, 30.

and not in the midst of its own things, but in the midst of *the things which God gives*; not in reference to the things of its own choice, but in reference to the things of God's providence. Instead of going forth in the manner of discursive prayer, embracing the earth and all its varieties and all its interests both for the present and in all coming time, it is a prayer which first establishes God in the centre of itself, and then realizes him as present and central in the constantly moving circle of present events, and prays in *reference to what now is*. When we say, however, that the soul in recollection is a soul praying to God and trusting in God in reference to what now is, we would not be understood to exclude those things, which have a natural and necessary connection with what is present. In other words, the prayer of Recollection, bound as it is to the present and the immediate, may go abroad to some extent, provided that we keep fully and firmly established in the centre; never losing sight of the claims and responsibilities of that which is directly around us; and embracing nothing, which has not a central relationship and connection.

7.—There is probably no form of prayer, which in its general results is more effectual than that of RECOLLECTION, in keeping those, who are the subjects of it, both in body and in spirit, from any and every thing, which God disapproves. The reason is obvious. This state of recollection, implying, as it does, faith in God's presence to the soul, faith in God's presence in events, faith in God as the controller of events and the fulfiller

of the promises, covers us from head to foot, if we may so express it, with the shield of faith, which meets and discomfits every danger. The experience of devout persons, in all periods of the church, confirms this statement. Those, who are religiously recollected, can hardly fail to be victorious. And they are the more likely to be so, because faith, when exercised in the state of recollection, conquers its enemies by looking only to God. And it may be proper to make a general remark here, which we cannot help regarding as of great practical importance, that the temptations to sin, to which we are always exposed in the present life, are not so easily overcome by opposing a *direct* resistance, which cannot be done without turning the mind in some degree from its true source of strength, as by keeping it fixed recollectedly and prayerfully upon God in the attitude of patient trust, and thus opposing what may be termed an *indirect* resistance. Either in consequence of a law of the mind's action or in virtue of the divine promise, or more probably in virtue of the promise fulfilled by means of the law, the temptation, assailing the soul when it is fixed recollectedly upon God, finds its most violent efforts unavailing; and while it sometimes leaves the soul scorched and blackened *outwardly*, showing the severity of the attack and how much we may have endured, it passes off and leaves it, in its *inner* nature, always unscathed, always unhurt. But when we cease to remain recollected, and in the ardor of an indiscreet zeal turn our faces from God, in

order to contend face to face with the temptation, we are very apt to be overcome.

8.—The Spirit of God dwells in the recollected heart. Such a heart may well be described, in the language of Scripture, as the Temple of the Holy Ghost. But this is true, not so much, of the incipient efforts of recollection, which are often variable and imperfect, as of its established state. No state of religious experience is characterized by higher and more constant acts of faith than this, when it becomes the established habit of the mind. But such faith, applicable to God as present to the soul and as present in all facts and events which now surround us, is not the product of nature, but of God's constant spiritual operation. God justifies us, renews us, sanctifies us, and makes us one with himself, in connection with that faith and that faith only, which is his own gift.

9.—Before leaving this subject, we wish to make one remark more. And we make it, in part, because it may aid some persons in correctly estimating their religious position. It is this. The prayer of recollection is characterized, in a high degree, *by outward silence*. The noise and violence of the natural life, which deals chiefly with the visible and the outward, have passed away. The tendency of the mind, when it is recollected in God, is inward. "The kingdom of God," says the Savior, "is within you." The world, considered as separate from God, calls after it in vain. It is attracted by the communications of the still small voice, which speaks within itself. It turns interiorly upon the centre,

because God is in the centre. And it goes outward, to mingle in the world's acts, the world's controversies, and the world's conversations, only at the bidding of the central Wisdom.

"I hear a voice you cannot hear,
"Forbidding me to stay;
"I see a hand you cannot see,
"Which beckons me away.

CHAPTER TENTH.

RELATION OF FAITH TO WANDERING THOUGHTS IN PRAYER.

Some religious persons more devoted than others. Persons, who are in the exercise of the highest religious feelings, sometimes afflicted with wandering thoughts. Of the remedy, which is found at these times in the exercises of faith. Wandering thoughts to some extent involuntary. Of the spirit in which this trial is to be received. Of its beneficial results.

AMONG the many, who live or rather attempt to live a life of religion, as if it were a thing of secondary importance, with vigor of effort and warmth of affection not at all proportioned to the object, it is pleasing to find some, who are faithful in the highest sense. They give themselves to God, as if he had a claim upon them, which could not be answered with any thing short

of all their powers. Like the prophets and apostles, whose commendation is in the Scriptures, they live "as seeing him, who is invisible." And the consequence is, in accordance with what we are taught in the same Scriptures, that inward condemnation, the result of an evil and unbelieving life, is taken away. "There is now no condemnation," says the Apostle, "to them, which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Recognizing the truth of the promises, and applying them to their own case, they are the subjects of an inward conviction, which is not more strong than it is consoling, that God is their father and friend.

2.—But there is one thing, which troubles them. Confident as they are of their love to God, and that God loves them, there is still something, which does not appear to be right. We refer to the fact, that they are subject like others, though generally not in an equal degree, to *wandering thoughts*. Objects unexpectedly thrust themselves upon their notice, in the most sacred seasons of retirement and of communion with God, and divert the mind's attention. Sometimes Satan avails himself of these occasions, and makes them seasons of special temptation. And it will readily be seen, that these results are the more distressing in proportion as the heart loves God. We well know, that the most devout persons are exposed to trials of this kind. But we have the consolation of knowing also, that they are not left without assistance. The grace of God is sufficient here, as elsewhere. At these seasons of great

trial, faith comes to our aid. It comes promptly and effectually.

3.—The thoughts may be disturbed, and may wander more or less from the central object, when the heart is true. Faith, recognizing the distinction between that in man which *perceives* and that which *feels*, teaches the person, who is the subject of these distractions, that God accepts the heart, the affections. Without the friendly offices of faith under these circumstances, the trial of mind would be exceedingly great. But this divine principle, attaching itself to the announcements of the Gospel, avails itself of the great principle of the New Dispensation, that God, without relinquishing his claim to absolute perfection, is willing to accept the *homage of love alone*. “Love,” says the Apostle, “is the fulfilling of the law.” If we have an inward conviction, resting upon good grounds, that our hearts are right with God, we are consoled and sustained in the belief, that he will not reject us. We may be the subject of physical imperfections, imperfections resulting either from our own sins or from the sins of those who have gone before us; we may err from time to time in judgment, and may thus indirectly, and without evil intention, be the means of injuring others; we may find it difficult and even impossible steadily to fix our thoughts upon that great Being who most justly claims them; but if at the present moment, whatever may be our physical or intellectual defects, whatever we may have done or whatever we may have failed to do, if at the *present moment* we love God with all our heart, we

are fully and freely accepted. It is very obvious, that we cannot have such a heart without having a heart, which is penitent for all that is wrong. It is equally evident, that we cannot have such a heart without a full and assured faith ; and with such a heart and with such a faith to sustain its purified and benevolent affections, we cannot for a moment doubt, especially with the promises of the Gospel plainly written before us, of God's favor and protection. The past is forgiven, and the present is accepted.

4.—Faith aids the soul, which is the subject of wandering thoughts and of other distractions of that kind, in another way ; namely, by calling to its remembrance and by establishing its belief, that these evils, as well as all other evils and all other events, make *a part in God's providences*. We sometimes err by limiting the sphere of providential arrangements. Those arrangements extend to every thing, which does not interfere with the claims of moral agency. They include mind, as well as matter. It is an important truth, though not always recognized, that mental trials, as well as those which are purely physical, may have their origin from God. They may properly be regarded as constituting one part of that allotment of suffering, which divine wisdom has assigned as the portion of our present fallen condition. And accordingly if God sends sickness and other temporal trials for our good, in order that we may know our weakness and dependence on the one hand, and may have opportunity to invigorate our christian graces on the other, he may also for the same

reason permit us to be the subjects of intellectual distractions.

5.—And we may be the more confirmed in this view, when we remember, that no care, no foresight, and no depth of piety, can altogether prevent or remedy this evil in man's present condition. To be the subject of wandering thoughts, to have the mind unexpectedly called away from its present meditations, is as truly a physical evil, or of the *nature* of a physical evil, as sickness or the physical decays of age. This is well understood, I suppose, by those, who are acquainted with the laws of the human mind. It is well known, that wandering thoughts depends in a great degree, if not exclusively, upon the laws of association. Laws, which are not under the control of the will, except indirectly; and which, therefore, lead to results, that can always be borne in a christian spirit, although they cannot always be prevented.

6.—The true state of mind, under such circumstances, is that of *patience*. We should not only endeavor to see the hand of the Lord in our afflictions, but to receive whatever his hand imposes, with right dispositions. The providences of God have each and all of them respectively a more or less distinct relation to a particular exercise of mind, a particular grace. That is to say, they all aim at something definite in experience. And accordingly the appropriate result of merciful providences is the spirit of thankfulness. The appropriate result of trials, (that result which always exists when they are met in a becoming temper,) is the

origin and growth of the grace of *patience*. "We glory in tribulations," says the Apostle Paul, "knowing that tribulation worketh patience."* "My brethren," says the Apostle James, "count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." It is said in commendation of the church of Ephesus, "I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy PATIENCE."† If, therefore, having done all in your power to prevent it, your thoughts wander from God in time of prayer, or at any other time when you might wish it to be otherwise, submit to it patiently. Guard against every emotion of disquietude, as well as against every murmuring expression. This trial, as well as others, has its appointed limits. To be silent and to endure, believing that God will come to our aid in his own time, is to be victorious.

7.—Looking at the subject rightly in its facts and its relations, we are not to regard distractions and wanderings of mind, trying though they may be, as a wholly unmingled evil. But in making this remark, we mean to have it understood, that we have done all in our power, under the existing circumstances, to prevent them, and to correct them. It is necessary to guard carefully at this point. We are to employ all the means which are appropriate to the prevention of this evil. But if our efforts fail of success, we are to regard it as an allotment of providence rather than a dispensation of our own choice, as an affliction rather than a

* Romans 5 : 3.

† James 1 : 2, 3.

sin. And afflictions, *all* afflictions are good, if we receive them well. It is a good and consoling direction of the Scriptures, "Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint, when thou art rebuked of him." And again it is said, that "no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous. Nevertheless, afterwards, it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness." He, who patiently sustains himself under the heavy trial, to which our attention has been directed, necessarily grows in grace. Faith, as well as patience, is exercised. And the result is, not only victory for the present, but increased strength against the temptations of the future.

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

RELATION OF FAITH TO A CORRECT VIEW OF THE PROVIDENCES OF GOD.

Of the doubts which frequently arise in connection with events. Positive knowledge not adequate to meet these doubts. God recognized by faith as present in all acts and events. A doctrine of faith that all events are ordered in wisdom and goodness. God glorified in them. Of the happiness of those who have the faith thus to believe. God present in our mental exercises, as well as in outward things.

To the man, who is destitute of faith, or whose faith is very feeble, the world presents a melancholy aspect. He cannot turn his eyes in any direction without witnessing more or less of violence and crime. He sees the virtuous depressed and the vicious prospered; the assassin holding a sceptre, and the man of prayer perishing on a scaffold. And the inward trouble, which he experiences, is increased by the doubts which this state of things is calculated to awaken within him, of the perfection of the ways of Providence. "Can it be possible," he says to himself, "that there is a God? Or if there be a God, is it a reasonable supposition, in view of the aspects of the world, that his administration of

things is characterized by perfect wisdom and goodness ?”

2.—It is obvious, that positive knowledge, which looks only at the present state of things, without the possibility of combining the known with the unknown, cannot subdue the sorrow and rectify the doubts, which thus arise. It can see only what is before it, with its complications of crime and wretchedness, of sin and its punishment, without seeing its relations to God and the universe in all coming time. Human wisdom, therefore, so far as it adheres to the outward and the visible, and *exists in knowledge without faith*, necessarily stands confounded. It is the office of faith, to meet the demands of this moral emergency, and to throw its irradiating and calm light over those divine providences, which present knowledge often leave in darkness.

3.—It is the office of faith to assure us in the first place, that God *is present in all things which occur*. This great truth we have already had repeated occasion to notice. It will be observed, however, that we do not say, that God is the *originator*, (certainly not in the absolute sense of the terms,) of all things which take place. Such a view, it is obvious, would imply the establishment of impossible relations, and would make a holy being the author of sin. But I suppose it will be generally admitted, especially by religious persons, that he is in some sense present to all things which take place ; that he exercises over all events a degree of control and direction ; and that every thing, which takes place, exists either by his control or by his permission.

So that we may lay down the general proposition, that whatever is, has God in it; not always in the same sense; but always in *some* sense. "Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without his notice." It is hardly necessary to say, that this is not, and cannot be a matter of direct knowledge; but is something received in the exercise of *faith*, resting on its appropriate foundations; and which, if we have a right view of the subject, cannot be received in any other way.

4.—Faith assures us further, if God is positively present to all events either by his direct aid or his overruling permission, that all events, considered in their relations and results, will be found to be ordered in wisdom and goodness. There are many things, which, as they are presented to our imperfect knowledge, appear disjointed and fragmentary, without any distinct evidences of wisdom in their origin or in their adaptation. There are some things, which are positively evil. The bitter root of sin hath sent forth the dark shade of its branches amid the fruits and flowers of the garden, which God himself has planted. But even sin itself can spread no further than God shall see fit to permit it; and the eye of faith looking at things in their relations and ultimate results, can behold the supreme Architect deducing good from this greatest of evils. If God is good and wise, and is truly at the head and helm of affairs, as no serious mind doubts, then such must be the ultimate result.

5.—Faith assures us again, that God is not only present, but is glorified in every thing, which takes place.

This naturally follows from what has just been said of the wisdom and goodness of his doings. If there were any want of his wisdom and goodness, in any thing which occurs, when considered in the whole extent of its relations, this view could not be taken. The defect of the thing, taking place and showing itself within the limits of a responsible government, would necessarily attach discredit to the being, however exalted he might be, who is the head of such government. When we view things out of their relations, (as we always do when we live by sight in distinction from faith,) the mind is necessarily perplexed. But, when faith, embracing things which it cannot see and recognizing facts which it cannot understand, extends the sphere both of facts and relations and makes them complete in God, then we see with entire clearness, that is to say, we have a full and distinct conviction, that God is glorified in every thing, because in every thing, considered in the full extent of its relations there is wisdom and goodness.

6.—The manifestation of God's glory is the true source of happiness to the universe. We of course speak here of the intelligent and moral universe. The chief source of happiness to moral and intelligent beings is the manifestation of the divine perfections. But God, when contemplated by the eye of faith, is manifested in every thing. God, therefore, is glorified in every thing. And those, who are like God by a correspondence and unity of character, are happy in every thing. In storm and in sunshine, in the earth's dearth

and barrenness as well as its fruitfulness, in small things as well as in great, in all the forms of adversity as well as of prosperity, there is not only a recognition of God's will, but of his perfect wisdom, goodness and glory. Such a soul is necessarily happy. In its outward nature, if we may so express it, it sympathizes with and mourns over the afflictions of men, but in the sanctuary of its interior nature, which sees every thing good and right relatively to God, it is acquiescent and happy. Its happiness is pure, unruffled, substantial.

7.—Hence it is that the Psalmist, amid the various afflictions to which he was exposed, some of them of a nature greatly calculated to try his faith, every where expresses his confidence and his joy in God. “I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart; and I will glorify thy name for evermore.”* Hence it is in the exercise of a strong faith that the Apostle Paul, amid his multiplied perplexities, is enabled to speak of himself as “chastened, and not killed, as sorrowful, *yet always rejoicing.*”†

8.—The fool hath said in his heart, “*there is no God.*” Those, whose minds have been reached in some degree by divine influences, recognize God's existence. They acknowledge *that he is*; and that they are responsible to him. Those, who are christians, especially those who are christians in the higher sense of the term, not only recognize but *possess him*. Faith not only restores God to acts and to events; but re-

* Ps. 86: 12.

† 2 Cor. 6: 10.

stores him to our hearts, and recognizes him in the person of the Holy Ghost, as the immediate author of all holy dispositions. This too is a part of God's providences, to "work in us, to will and to do of his good pleasure." It is a high exercise of faith thus to recognize and receive God as the inward operator. This is possession, as well as recognition. God cannot do many mighty works within us where there is unbelief. And without this form of faith, which places him in the centre of the mind's exercises, we cannot become "one with him." It was the prayer of the Savior, uttered in behalf of his disciples, "*As Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they may also become one in us.*"

9.—One of the great works of the Infinite Mind, in the person of the Holy Spirit, is, by means of an inward teaching, developed in the principle of faith,

"To vindicate the ways of God to man."

It is a remark, which is often and justly made, that the Holy Spirit, in his inward communications, always recognizes the laws of the mental structure and of mental operations. It is not possible for this divine Agent, with all his powers of perception and influence, to teach a stone or a block of wood. And this for the simple reason, that matter has not a nature, which is in any sense the correlative of instruction; it is wholly unsusceptible of the powers of perception, of comparison, and belief. Mind, and not matter, must be the subject of his operation: and it can be such a subject only in virtue of its mental nature; and its mental nature, which

implies something definable, something fixed, involves the idea of mental law. A nature without law is, to my mind, inconceivable. It is a contingency, if we may so express it, and not a truth; an accident, and not a nature. The mind, therefore, is, what it is, *by law*. Independently of law, *existing in itself*, it never can be known. Knowledge is not applicable to that which is *without* law. Independently of law, therefore, as an essential part of its own nature, it can never be the subject of the divine knowledge or of the divine operation. It is on this ground, therefore, that we assert, that the Holy Spirit, in vindicating inwardly God's ways and character, makes use of the principle of faith, which is one of the modes of mental operation. He does not speak arbitrarily, but through the agency of this great religious principle. And speaking thus, he has a voice, which, in being adapted to the laws of mental operation, silences the suggestions of scepticism, and gives divine peace to the troubled spirit.

THE HAPPY SHEPHERD.

[I have seen the narrative of a conversation, which purports to have passed between a poor shepherd and M. Bouthillier de Rance, a distinguished Frenchman of the seventeenth century, who renounced a life of opulent ease and of worldly fame for one of poverty and religious seclusion; and who is now more generally known by his religious writings, and in ecclesiastical history, as the Abbe De Rance. The narrative, irrespective of the question of its being founded in fact or not, seemed to me to be interesting, and to be particularly appropriate as an illustration of some of the principles of this chapter. It is for this reason, that it is introduced here.]

"M. de Rance," says the writer, "having experienced some very severe afflictions and disappointments while yet ignorant of the only source of real consolation, sunk into a deep and settled melancholy. In this gloomy mood he wandered in the woods for hours together, regardless of the weather and seemingly unconscious of every surrounding object.

On one of the brightest mornings in May, he was wandering in his usual disconsolate manner, amongst the wooded mountains that skirted his estate. Suddenly he came to a deep glen, which terminated in a narrow valley. It was covered with rich green herbage, and was surrounded on all sides with thick woods. A flock was feeding at the bottom and a clear brook watered it. Underneath the broad shade of a spreading oak sat an aged shepherd, who was attentively reading a book. His crook and pipe were lying on the bank near him, and his faithful dog was guarding his satchel at his feet. The Abbe was much struck by his appearance. His locks were white with age, yet a venerable and cheerful benignity appeared in his countenance. His clothes were worn completely threadbare and patched of every different color. His brow was furrowed by time ; but as he lifted up his eyes from the book, they seemed almost to beam with the expression of heartfelt peace and innocence.

Notwithstanding his mean garb, the Abbe de Rance involuntarily felt a degree of respect and kindness for the man. 'My good friend, (said he with a tone of affectionate sympathy,) you seem very poor, and at an

advanced age; can I render your latter days more comfortable?’

The old man looking at him steadfastly, but with the greatest benignity, replied, ‘I humbly thank you, Sir, for your kindness; did I stand in need of it, I should most gratefully accept it; but blessed be God, his mercy and goodness have left nothing even to wish.’

‘Nothing to wish! (replied M. de Rance, who began to suspect his Shepherd’s garb to be a disguise.) I shall suspect you of being a greater philosopher than any I know!—Think again.’

‘Sir,’ replied the Shepherd mildly,—‘this little flock which you see, I love as if it were my own, though it belongs to another; God has put it in my master’s heart to show me more kindness than I deserve. I love to sit here and meditate on all the mercies of God to me in this life; and above all, I love to read and meditate on his glorious promises for that which is to come. I will assure you, Sir, that while I watch my sheep, I receive many a sweet lesson on the good Shepherd’s watchful care over me and all of us. What can I wish, Sir, more?’

‘But, good man,’ returned the Abbe, ‘did it never come into your head, that your master may change, or your flock may die? Should you not like to be independent, instead of trusting to fortuitous circumstances?’

‘Sir,’ replied the Shepherd, ‘I look upon it that I do not depend upon circumstances, but on the great and good God, who directs them. This is what makes me happy, happy at heart. God in mercy enables me

to lie down and sleep secure, on the immutable strength of that blessed word,—“*All things work together for good, to them that love God.*” My reliance in my poverty is the love of God; if I were ever so rich I could not be more secure; for on what else, but on his will, can the most flourishing prospects depend for their stability?’

The Abbe felt some emotion at this pointed observation; he however smothered it and said, ‘Very few have your firmness of mind.’

‘Sir,’ answered the man, ‘you should rather say few seek their strength from God.’ Then steadily fixing his eye on M. de Rance, he added, ‘Sir, it is not firmness of mind; I know misfortune as well as others; and I know, too, that where affliction comes close, no firmness of mind only, can or will carry a man through. However strong a man may be, afflictions may yet be stronger, unless his strength be in the strength of God. Again, Sir, I say, it is not firmness of mind, but it is a firm and heartfelt conviction founded on Scripture and the experience of God’s mercy in Christ.—*It is faith, and that faith itself is the gift of God.*’

The man paused, then looking at M. de Rance with great interest, he added, ‘Sir, your kindness calls for my gratitude. Permit me to show it in the only way I can. Then I will add, that if you do not know this gift, he calls you to it as much as me. I see by your countenance, that though so young, you have known sorrow. I could sincerely wish, that you might read on mine, that though at so advanced and infirm an age,

I enjoy the blessings of peace. Yet though you are probably learned, whilst I am unlearned, I believe the secret of true happiness is the same to all. Let me then show my gratitude, by telling you what the teaching of God, or his word and providence, has taught me. I was not always blest with the happiness I now enjoy. When I was young I had a farm of my own, I had a wife whom I dearly loved, and I was blessed with sweet children. Yet, with all these good things I was never happy; for I knew not God, the Supreme good. With every temporal blessing I never reaped pure enjoyment, for my affections were never in due subordination. My eyes being turned to the channel of temporal blessings instead of God their source, I was in constant anxiety, either to grasp more, or lest I should lose what I had already got. God had compassion upon me, and sent misfortune to lead me to him. I once had a son, the pride of my heart; a daughter, and she began to be the friend and comfort of her mother. Each was grown up, and began to yield us comfort beyond our fondest hopes; when each we had to watch through a slow and lingering disease. Blessed be God, that taught them to live the life of his saints and gives them now as the angels in heaven to behold his glory face to face. They were taught but not of us; it was the work of God; of that God whom as yet we knew not. Their deaths—but, oh! how unspeakably bitter did that pang seem, which came in mercy to call us to God and give us spiritual life! Till we fainted under the stroke, we did not remember that our insensible hearts had

never yet been thankful for the blessing, whose loss we were ready to repine at; we can now in mercy say that we know afflictions do not spring out of the dust. Blessed be God, I can now from my very heart thank him, for uniting me for all the ages of a blissful eternity, with those dear and angelic spirits towards whom I only thought of the short intercourse of time. Oh! how short my views; how long his love. Surely his mercy, and the fruit of it, endureth forever. This was our greatest affliction; besides, I have, through a variety of events, lost my relations, and my possessions, and I now, in my old age, serve in the house where I was once master. Yet, I find indeed, that "TO KNOW THE ONLY TRUE GOD, AND JESUS CHRIST WHOM HE HAS SENT, IS INDEED LIFE ETERNAL." A man's life does not consist in the abundance which he possesses, but in that peace which passes all understanding, and which the world can neither give nor take away. I desire to live by Faith day by day, and trust to the Lord to provide for the morrow. In short, Sir, I have found by experience, that every worldly good without God is empty, and that God without any worldly good, is as of old, all sufficient!

This discourse struck M. de Rance to the heart. It was as a ray of light from above. He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision."

CHAPTER TWELFTH.

RELATION OF FAITH TO THE PRAYER OF ADORATION.

Remarks on the use of the term prayer. The prayer of adoration not frequently experienced. A communicated, and not a self-originated state. Other characteristics or marks of this state. Has its foundation in faith.

IN entering upon the subject of the present chapter, it may be proper to repeat the remark made on a former occasion, that the term PRAYER, as it is used in writers on religious experience, does not appear to be restricted to the mere act of *supplication*, although that is the more frequent application of it ; but is sometimes employed by such writers in a more general sense, and as expressive of any and every form of truly spiritual communion with God. This more general use of the term furnishes occasion for regarding the subject of prayer in different lights, and for speaking of different kinds of prayer ; different not only in the outward manifestation or manner ; but different also in the precise form of the internal mental operation. Hence, in accordance with one of the higher forms of realized

Christian experience, and not at variance with the approved expressions of spiritual writers, we may conveniently and properly speak of the PRAYER of ADORATION. It is our object, in the present chapter, to endeavor to illustrate, in some respects, the nature of our exalted form of spiritual communion.

2.—But before proceeding further, it may be of some consequence, to remark, that the state of mind, which we thus find it convenient as well as proper to denominate the PRAYER of ADORATION, is not, as we have reason to think, very frequently experienced by those, who are but little advanced in the divine life. Under special visitations of the Holy Spirit, they may sometimes possess it; but not frequently, nor for a great length of time. Hence it may perhaps happen, that what may be said by us on this subject, may not be readily and fully understood by such persons, in consequence of a want of personal experience. It is to be remembered, however, that the want of such experience, which is none the less to be regretted on account of its frequency, does not negative or annul the truth, although it may render the mind incapable of fully comprehending it.

3.—We proceed to remark, in the first place, that the prayer of adoration does not appear to be a *forced* state of mind; or a state of mind gotten up by the compressed excitation and workings of the natural or even of the religious sensibilities. In other words, what we mean to say, is, that this state of mind is not one, which depends chiefly upon human choice, and

which comes and goes at man's bidding. The self-moved working of the internal machinery, with however much skill and energy it may be operated, can never develope itself in this great and high result. The prayer of adoration is peculiarly and emphatically the result of the communicated influences and attractions of the Divine Mind. The power, which originates the state, may be said, in some important sense, to be from without, rather than from within. God, in his transcendent purity and in the quiet energy of his blessed and infinite nature, draws gently near, and takes possession. The soul, under the leadings of a divine inspiration, feels and recognizes his approach; and yields herself submissively and affectionately to his embraces.

4.—In accordance with what has been said, we remark secondly, that the preparatory state of the prayer of adoration is not, in general, and perhaps never, a state of interior agitation and of earnest activity, but rather of holy recollection and of divine repose. Perhaps we may describe it as a state of inward solitude. Under the influence of the inward conviction that God is, and ought to be All in all, we feel that it is not the time nor the place for the visitation of outward things. And accordingly we close our ears that they may cease to hear; we shut our eyes that they may no longer see; we repress that eager curiosity which opens the windows and doors of the mind; and remain, as it were, without sight, and without hearing, till, in the inner depths of this spiritual retirement, even from the hidden centre of the soul, there springs up the

divine light of love, a heavenly illumination; and our heart rejoices, because God is with us. He comes to his own; and his own receive Him.

5.—In the third place, the prayer of adoration does not appear to be perceptive of particular and personal needs; neither is it reflective and discursive. It makes no minute recapitulation of its own necessities; it has no prolonged argumentation. In this respect it differs much from the ordinary forms of prayer. It does not undertake to teach God, nor to reason with Him; nor even to plead with Him. It forgets itself. Under the influence of a divine enchantment, it almost ceases to be cognitive of its own existence. Sweetly quiescent and annihilated as to all personal interests, it sinks unconsciously into the bosom of that divine object, which receives alike its thoughts and its affections.

6.—We remark further, that the prayer of adoration is characterized, in the subject of it, by the loss of all self-will. It is the clear perception of the perfect rectitude, of the moral beauty and excellency of the divine will, which lays the foundation of the attracting and absorbing power, which the adoring soul experiences from that source. This implies, that it does not, and cannot have, any desire or any purpose at variance with the divine desire or the divine purpose. Any movement of that kind would startle the soul, as if invaded by the presence of a terrible enemy; and would be like the entrance of Satan into Paradise.

7.—Among other things, the prayer of adoration may be said to have no language. The state of the

soul is too high, too intimate with the Divine Mind, to be adequately represented in the forms of human speech. The attempt, at such a time, to subject the interior emotions and desires to the arid formularies of human language, would be disastrous to the feelings themselves. Sometimes, however, certain broken and concise forms of speech, which harmonize peculiarly with the existent feelings, pass without effort through the mind, though but seldom vocally enunciated. Such as, "Thou art my God;" "I have none other beside Thee;" "In Thee only do I trust;" "God is love;" "Thou art not a God afar off;" "Thou art my portion;" "My soul hungers and thirsts after Thee;" "I am my Beloved's, and his desire is towards me." If a person should at such a time attempt to bring his mind to the Meditative or Discursive form of Prayer, (that form of prayer which thinks, and particularizes, and multiplies itself upon many objects,) and should attempt to enunciate that which the meditative action had originated, he would necessarily perplex and probably terminate the prayer of Adoration. The two forms of prayer have, to some extent, two different centres; and appear, therefore, considered as existing at the same time, to be incompatible with each other. In the Meditative or Discursive form of Prayer the mind necessarily centres, in a great degree, in itself and in other inferior objects, which are now presented before it as appropriate objects of the Divine commiseration and blessing. But in the prayer of Adoration, the mind, oblivious of itself, and of every thing which has rela-

tion to self, is absorbed and centred in the Infinite. The soul is drawn out towards God in great peace and love, which is inexpressible. In being lost in God, as it were, it finds the complete accomplishment of all its desires. Hence it is neither discursive nor vocal; but centred upon one object and silent.

8.—The prayer of Adoration is not the same thing with the experience, which is denominated Ecstasy or Rapture. The state of Ecstasy or Rapture appears to possess more of an ILLUMINATIVE character. That is to say, there is not only joy, but revelation. The Ecstatic state, if we may rely on the declarations of those who have been the subjects of it, is sometimes distinctly perceptive of the glories of the heavenly world. It is also more marked, more powerful in its personal effects; so much so at times as violently to affect the physical system. It continues also only for a short time; and is not often repeated. If it were frequent and long continued, it would exhaust our physical strength; and is evidently inconsistent, as a permanent or oft-repeated state, with the present condition of things. In the prayer of adoration, on the contrary, the intellect, which is the receptacle of illuminative communications, is almost closed; and the affections are chiefly at work; operating in a peaceful and quiet manner, and yet with great richness and depth of experience. God comes near; not so much in his more striking manifestations, as in his great condescension and love; not under any form or image or in any visible shape; but revealed to the dark eye of faith, the eye that sees without seeing,

as present in the soul, and as received to its hidden and inmost embraces. In the state of Rapture the voluntary power seems to be nearly or entirely lost; utterly incapable for the time being, of directing the mind promptly and calmly to any appropriate worldly business. But in the state of Adoration, if God in his Providence indicates, that duties inconsistent with that state are to be attended to, the person may break off at once and attend to them. It is easy for him to do it, because one of the leading attributes of his present state of mind is the suspension of his own will. And not only this, it may be said further, that a person is never more strengthened and never more prepared to enter upon duties, however trying they may be, than when he enters upon them, immediately successive to a season of adoration. The soul, as it recedes from this state and enters into the ordinary state, gives evidence of bringing with it a high degree of celestial invigoration and beauty.

9.—I think it is easy to perceive, that faith is, and necessarily must be the basis of the prayer of adoration. Not faith in its ordinary form, but faith existing in the highest degree. If the slightest doubt should enter, (a doubt, for instance, of God's presence or of his moral perfections,) there can be no question, that the mind would at once sink from its state of repose and affectionate intimacy. The glory of God, as it is now displayed before the mind's vision, would disappear; the influences of the life of self would revive; and the intimate and blessed communion, which now



exists, would necessarily cease. But this is so obvious, that it is not necessary to delay upon it. We can only add, that language can but imperfectly express the blessedness of that man, whose separation from the world is such, and whose faith is such, as to result in frequent seasons of this exalted and divine prayer.

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

OF THE LIFE OF FAITH AS COMPARED WITH THE LIFE OF NATURE.

Import of the phrase natural life. The life of nature and the life of faith different in their central principle. The natural life sees only what is addressed to the natural vision. The life of faith sees beyond it. The natural life full of desires. The life of faith hungers and thirsts after righteousness. Comparison of the life of nature and the life of faith in other respects.

THERE is a life of nature, which is good ; and there is a life of nature, which is evil. Nature, as God first formed it, was good. It was pronounced good by its maker himself. It has become evil by its degeneracy ; and so long as it remains degenerate, it is properly characterized as evil. And accordingly, when we use the phrase the life of nature, in distinction from the life of faith, we mean the natural life degenerated ; we mean the natural life without the restoring and purify-

ing grace of sanctification ; we mean nature living or attempting to live in its own strength ; the soul of man without the life of God in it.

2.—The natural life has, for its interior principle, SELF. The life of faith has, for its inward and central principle, GOD. They start from two centres, which are entirely different from each other ; they take an opposite and conflicting course ; they terminate in positions as entirely variant, as light and darkness, as life and death.

3.—The natural life sees only what is addressed to the natural vision. It sees the earth in its richness, the firmament in its beauty. The life of faith sees that which is beyond the power of natural vision ; and recognizes the author in his works. It refuses to separate the thing made from its maker. To Him who has faith, the heavens are not only beautiful ; but, in the language of the Psalmist, "*they declare the glory of God.*"

4.—The life of faith knows nothing of itself. Its constant teacher is the Holy Ghost. It walks, blindfold, moment by moment, in the track of God's providences. The life of nature, has man's knowledge, but not God's knowledge ; and rendered vain in its own conceit, is puffed up with that pride of spirit, "which goes before a fall."

5.—The natural life is full of desires. Wherever it finds an object, that promises pleasure or honor or any other worldly good, it puts forth its attachments. The life of faith, while it recognizes the fact and the desira-

bleness of earthly good, first of all, and as necessary to the regulation of all other desire, "hungers and thirsts after righteousness."

6.—The life of nature gives birth to all those various feelings, the hopes and the fears, the attachments and the aversions, the love and the hatred, which are appropriate to the natural life. The life of faith is the parent of the spirit of meekness, of long-suffering, of forgiveness, of love both for friends and enemies, and of all other feelings and graces, which are appropriate to those, who are born of the Spirit.

7.—The life of nature either puts no restraint, or but a very inconsiderable and imperfect restraint, upon the natural passions; permitting them to arise on a multitude of occasions, and to exist in great strength. The life of faith, which cherishes the love of God, as the supreme inward principle, allows of no desire, no emotion, no passion, which is inconsistent with this love.

8.—The life of faith gives peace to the conscience, because it brings union with God, who reconciles the world to himself through Christ, "not imputing to men their transgressions." The life of nature is goaded, moment by moment, by inward remorse. Or if it sometimes stupifies the conscience, and lulls it in a deceitful calm, it is a calm which will be followed sooner or later by a storm the more terrible for this deceitful prelude.

9.—The life of nature, as it has no real confidence in anything out of itself, seeks for signs and manifestations. It trusts neither men nor God, except so far as it sees, or thinks it sees. The life of faith, which has

no confidence in any thing out of God, desires nothing and seeks nothing, as the foundation of its action and its hopes, but God's word alone.

10.—The life of nature, which rests upon itself as its foundation, or upon other human instrumentality, is full of doubts. It doubts of its rectitude, and of course doubts of its happiness. It doubts for the past and the present, and of course doubts the future. It is the very nature of the life of faith to be cheerful. It looks upon the past as forgiven, upon the present as approved, and upon the future as sprinkled over with hope and with glory.

11.—The life of nature trusts to human instrumentality. In all its efforts it looks to man, to man's wisdom, to man's strength, and to all that littleness of selfish calculation and policy, which such a reliance is calculated to engender. The life of faith rejects all methods and instrumentalities, which are dissociated from God. Its methods and its instruments are such as are presented in God's Providence, and such as are authorized by God's approbation.

12.—The life of nature does not pray. He, who has no faith, has no power to pray. He, may *desire*, but he cannot pray, because he does not believe in the favorable disposition of the Being, to whom his prayer should be directed. The life of faith prays always. He, who believes, rejecting all self dependence, naturally looks somewhere else for support. And trusting in God, as the only adequate source of support, it is to God that he naturally offers up his supplications.

13.—All life is, or ought to be, in the present moment. The natural life lives in the present moment, considered as a source of present gratification. Its language is, "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." The life of faith lives in the present moment, attentive to all its facts and responsive to all its obligations, because the present moment involves the fulfilment of present duty. Its language is, "behold, now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation."

14.—The life of nature takes pleasure in the suggestions and tendencies of the human will. It is in the exercise of his own will especially, that it feels its strength and indulges its pride. The life of faith, in this as in every thing else at variance with the life of nature, takes no pleasure but in the will of God.

15.—The life of nature, unrestrained by any principle, out of and above itself, is the subject of strong and variable impulses, and is violent and noisy in its action. The life of faith, regulated by a principle not its own, and living by a life which exists in another, moves calmly at the divine bidding, without agitation and clamor for the present, and without foreboding and fear for the future.

16.—The life of nature begins in self, and ends in self. The life of faith begins with God, and ends with God. The one, therefore, is compressed within the smallest possible limit, regarding nothing and loving nothing beyond its own interest ; the other assimilated and baptized into the divine nature, expands itself with the divine presence and the divine benevolence.

17.—The life of nature and the life of faith might be contrasted in many other particulars. The points of difference are many ; the points of assimilation and union, none. We do not propose to pursue the subject further, except to say, that those, who live a life of faith, are accepted of God ; those, who live the life of nature, can find no acceptance, no happiness, no reward, except what they find *out of God*. To be without God is to be lost. To possess God is to possess salvation and everlasting life.

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH.

ON THE RELATION OF FAITH TO THE STATE OF DIVINE UNION

Passages of Scripture, which have reference to the state of union with God. No such union without a similarity of character. Only one principle of movement in God, that of holy love. Those only, in whom there is the same ruling principle, can unite with him. Where the correspondence of mind exists, the union necessarily takes place. The relation of faith to the state of divine union. Concluding remarks.

“HE, that is joined to the Lord,” says the Apostle, “is ONE SPIRIT.” “Abide in me, and I in you,” says the Savior. “I am the vine, ye are the branches. He, that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit ; for without me ye can do noth-

ing." "Holy Father," says the Savior in another place, "keep through thine own name those, whom thou hast given me, *that they may be one as we are.*" That is to say, as is evident from another passage in the same chapter, that they may be in oneness or unity with us, as we are with each other. The passage to which we refer is that, in which, with a little change of expression, the Savior repeats in behalf of his future disciples the supplication, which he had just offered in behalf of those who were present. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which believe on me through their word; that they all may be ONE; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be ONE IN US." Finding such passages of Scripture, as those to which we have just referred, in different parts of the New Testament, it is not surprising, that writers on christian experience should recognize the state of Divine Union or Union with God as a scriptural state, and should endeavor to describe its nature. We have endeavored to say something in illustration of this interesting subject, in another Work somewhat kindred to this in its character, the Interior Life. A few remarks, however, may properly be made here.

2.—One remark is this. There can be no effectual and real union in those objects, where there is an entire unlikeness to each other. This is true, to a certain extent, of natural objects. The sunbeam will not mingle with the mud, on which it shines. The pure gold rejects all real assimilation and mixture with the dross, that forms a part of the original mass. But still more

true is it in relation to things of a moral and religious nature. Truth cannot unite with falsehood. Love cannot assimilate with hatred. The spirit of rectitude can have no harmonious alliance with laxity of moral principle. They are necessarily variant and antagonistical. And this is universally true. Things, which are morally and religiously unlike, cannot be the subjects of a real and harmonious union. God, therefore, who is holy, can never enter into moral union with a being, who is unholy. He may unite with such a being physically, in the way of giving a physical support to its various powers; but he can unite morally, and to the degree of entire union, only with a being, that is like himself.

3.—With these general views on the subject, we proceed to say further, that the Divine Mind, in its principle of movement, is never variant with itself, is never multiplied but simple. In other words, God, being in unity with himself, without which he could never under any circumstances be in permanent unity with other beings, has inwardly but one principle of action, namely, *love regulated by rectitude*. Love itself, when it exists in the highest or supreme degree, always excludes every selfish movement; which is practically the same as to say, that it requires a strict adherence to right. It would be a moral contradiction, as well as an absurdity, in language, to suppose supreme or perfect love, a love which by the very definition of itself loves every object just as it ought to love it, to be knowingly at variance with supreme or perfect rectitude. God, therefore, in the divine simplicity of his character, may

be said, in the Scripture expressions, to have a "single eye," to act with a single motive, namely, from the pure and powerful inspiration of holy love. This is the element, in which God moves. Or perhaps we may say without irreverence, and with still greater propriety, that this is the paramount and inspiring element, which moves God. "God is love." We assert therefore, in accordance with what has already been laid down, that it is impossible for God to enter into union, in the moral sense of the terms, with beings, who are unlike himself, in not acting from one principle. The whole inward action, so far as it is of a moral and religious nature, must be conformed to one law, and the man must be made in unity with himself, before he can become in unity with God. It is self-evident, that a man, who is variant with himself, acting partly from good and partly from bad motives, can never be in perfect union with a being who is one with himself and acts only from a holy motive. It is only, therefore, he, who is holy, in other words whose heart is inspired with the one great principle of holy love, and who in the figurative language of Scripture has a "single eye," that is in the state of mind, which is necessarily prerequisite to that of union with God.

4.—But supposing that we are in the right state of mind, so far as the antecedent preparation is concerned, the inquiry still remains, how shall the state of union be brought about? By what process shall it be effected? The proper reply to this inquiry, if we have a right understanding of it, is, that it takes place of

itself. It seems to me to be a self-evident truth in moral and religious philosophy, that there is, and must be, a natural and necessary tendency in all holy beings, to seek, and to rejoice in each other. It is their nature. They cannot help it. How can purity be averse from purity? How can holy love fail to love its own likeness? They tend, therefore, towards each other naturally and necessarily, in the line of a pure and ardent affection. It is a matter of course, therefore, and as certain as the existence of God is certain, that God will unite himself in the most intimate manner with every holy mind, not merely as a sustainer of the mind physically, but as a friend, a counsellor, a father; more intimately, we have no hesitancy in saying, than the power of language can express. As the natural sun may be said to see his own glory repeated in every planet that reflects his beams; so the Divine Mind may be said to see the image and reflection of itself in every being that is holy. Indeed it may be said, when we consider their moral as well as physical dependence upon God, that the holiness of every inferior mind, is his own holiness; as much as the glory of every inferior and attendant planet is the glory of the natural sun. God, therefore, can no more fail to love and to unite himself with holy beings, than he can fail to love and be at union with his own character. This is an eternal law, developed from the very nature of holiness; and unchangeable as truth is. And accordingly in the language of the Book of Proverbs, "God loves them

that love Him ; and his delight is to be with the children of men." (Prov. 8 : 17, 31.)

5.—After what has been said, it is hardly necessary to add, that the state of Union is entirely at variance with the life of Self, and that consequently it implies the extinction of all unsanctified desire. Those, who are the subjects of that pure and holy love, which results in the state of divine unity, have given themselves to God, to act from the same principle on which he acts, to be his only, and his forever. And God, in the process of purification, always works in them in correspondence to their willingness to be his. Purified, therefore, from every inordinate and wrong element, they must of course be purified from every desire, which has not God in it. Desires, which are necessary to every rational being, have not ceased ; but they have merged their character of desires of nature, in that of desires of grace. And if, considered in relation to subordinate objects, they may be said to be many, it is still true, that they all terminate in one, namely, *that God's will may be accomplished*. It is desire, in unity with God's desire, which sanctifies all other desire. It is this also, which simplifies them all, by reducing them, when they are analyzed, into one. And consequently there are no conflicting motives of action. God, in-dwelling, takes the place of nature. One principle rules, and one alone ; that of holy love. So that those, who are in union with God, brought into harmony with themselves, as well as into harmony with their Creator, have no

object at variance with that which he himself proposes; but are always inspired with the same motive which animates him, and always move in the same direction. Their former life, which was characterized by its wild and uncentred, "multiplicity" of movement, has not only changed its nature and become simplified by the predominance of a single motive; but has passed from notice, as a thing *acting for itself and in itself*, and has become "*hidden*," as the Scriptures express it, in its unity with the divine life.

6.—The object of the present work, which aims chiefly to indicate the position of faith, considered as the foundation and the great support of the religious exercises, leads us to remark further, that the state of DIVINE UNION implies the existence of strong faith. Without strong religious faith, it is morally impossible, that there should be a relinquishment of those desires, which constitute the life of nature. We are so formed, that we must desire something, must cling to something, and if we do not cling to God, we must cling to ourselves. Faith, existing in an adequate degree, gives us the victory over the world. Faith sunders the disordered ties of nature, and forms the tie, which binds us to the Divinity. And it does it, first of all and chiefly, by working in us a deep, unalterable conviction, that God is the only worthy object of our supreme thoughts and affections. And he is so, because he is *right*; right in his nature, right in his purposes, right in his actions. This faith, which, in recognizing God as holy and good, leads us to

seek a reconciliation with him through Jesus Christ, reacts upon our own nature, and tends to purify it. It is not possible to have faith in God as a pure and holy being, and to love him and to desire to be like him, which is the natural result of such faith, without becoming better and purer ourselves. It is thus, that faith, by giving us the victory over ourselves, prepares us for union with God; an union, which is never delayed, and which never can be delayed after the antecedents, which are appropriated to it, are completed.

7.—There is an important passage of Scripture, which is forcibly brought to our attention in connection with this subject. The Savior, having prayed, that his immediate disciples, and those who should afterwards be his disciples, might be brought into unity with himself and with God; adds as a special reason for desiring this result, "*that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*" Is it not a just inference from the reason, which is thus assigned by the Savior as the ground of his supplication, that the unbelief, which exists in the world, is owing in a considerable degree, to the fact, that Christians are not generally in the state of divine union? If the world, seeing them divested of self and in union with God, are led to exercise belief, it is certainly natural to suppose, that, seeing them disobedient and divergent from God, they would be led to unbelief, or at least would believe less strongly than they otherwise would. And if such be a correct view of the subject, how strong is the obligation resting upon every disciple in Christ, to seek earnestly the highest possible

attainments in religion. In proportion as christians enter more and more deeply into the spirit of the gospel, in proportion as they have more faith, more love, and enter more into unity with God, in that same proportion may we expect, that other minds will be led to perceive the errors of irreligion, and to put their trust in the Savior. At the present moment, the world needs, and perhaps we may say in general terms, it desires no argument additional to what it already has, except that of *holy living*. It is obvious, from the remarkable passage to which we have referred, that the Savior looked forward with the deepest interest to the development of this mighty argument. I think it is very clear that he has connected, in the relation of effect and cause, the world's salvation with this development. We are permitted to judge, therefore, on the Savior's principle, of the state of the church from the state of the world.

8.—And what is the state of the world? There are many things to encourage, undoubtedly. There are many things which we gratefully recognize as showing, that there is some degree of faith on the earth. But if something has been done, much remains undone. If there is something to be grateful for, there is much to call forth bitter tears. Wars still exist on the earth in many places. Man still sheds the blood of his fellow man; and gives that money for purposes of slaughter, which would better be expended in the circulation of the Bible. Millions are held in slavery; their chains unbroken. Intemperance, licentiousness, and many

other moral evils still abound. There are hundreds of millions, to whom the Gospel has never been preached. And in lands more favored there are many millions, who do not practically receive it. And why is it after the lapse of so many christian ages, that these unfavorable things exist? The Savior has distinctly intimated the answer in the passage, to which we have referred. His disciples are not made "one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee." They are not made "*one in us*." They stand divergent from the great Centre. The grace of sanctification has not had its just work. And just so far as there is a want of sanctification, there is a want of union. They refuse fully and cordially to unite with God; and God, therefore, cannot unite with them. But if the Savior was unable to do any thing of himself, as he expressly assures us,* much less can man. Man has power to do good, only so far as he has God in him in union. The world, therefore, remains unconverted.

9.—It is obvious, then, that there must be more religion. And in saying this, we hope we shall be excused in adding, that we mean something more than that religion, which taking root in the head, with a little stirring perhaps of the emotions, works outwardly to the circumference without going inward to the centre; a form of religion, which shows itself in various ways, which are calculated to attract attention, but always in sound more than in substance, in profession more than

* John 8: 28.

in truth. We mean, in distinction from these inadequate developments, that religion, which is described by the Savior himself in the fifth chapter of Matthew, and which consists in meekness, in humility of spirit, in mercy, in peace-making, in purity of heart, in laboring and suffering for the Gospel, and in hungering and thirsting after righteousness. We mean that kind of religion, which is described by the Apostle Paul in the thirteenth chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians ; a religion, which suffereth long and is kind, which neither boasts of itself nor envies others, which seeks not its own and is not easily provoked, but hopes all things and bears all things. A religion, which, with a humble acquiescence and gratitude, and without disquieting thoughts for the morrow, loves, in the spirit of holy union, to be just where God places it, and to do just what God imposes upon it. A religion, which loves the great object of love so much, that it forgets itself ; and which, in forgetting and losing itself, finds all things, and more than all things, in God. Under the influence of such a religion, which, if it exists at all, must exist with Faith for its foundation, the aspect of the world would soon change. Well, therefore, may we say with the Disciples, "LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH."*

* Luke 17: 5.

RELIGIOUS MAXIMS,

HAVING A CONNECTION WITH THE DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE
OF HOLINESS.

I.

Let the time of temptation be the time of silence. Words react upon feelings; and if Satan, in the time of our trials, can induce us to utter a hasty or unadvised word, he will add, by so doing, to the power of his previous assaults, and increase the probability of his getting the victory.

II.

It is one of the surest signs that the natural life still exists and flourishes in us, if we have what may be called an *outward eye*; and, instead of looking inwardly upon our own failings, are prone closely to watch and to judge others. "Judge not that ye be not judged." One of the first inquiries arising in the mind of a truly humbled and sanctified person, when he sees another in transgression, is, "Who maketh me to differ?" And one of the first supplications which he offers is, "Lord, have compassion upon my offending brother!"

III.

He whose life is hid with Christ in God, may suffer injustice from the conduct or words of another, but he can *never suffer loss*. He sees the hand of God in every thing. He knows that every thing which takes place

has either a direct or indirect relation to his present state, and is designed for his benefit. "All things work together for his good."

IV.

He that standeth in God in such a manner as to have no will but the divine will, accounts every thing which takes place as a manifestation of God. If God is not the thing itself, God is nevertheless manifested IN THE thing. And thus it is with God, that he first communicates through the medium of the thing in which he manifests himself. And consequently, as God is the first object which presents itself, he imputes nothing to the subordinate creatures, neither condemning nor approving, neither sorrowing nor rejoicing, without first referring whatever takes place to God, and viewing it in the clearness and truth of the divine light.

V.

It is not safe to dwell upon the failings and weaknesses of the church, without at the same time dwelling upon the resources and goodness of God. In the exercise of a humble faith we must connect the greatness of the remedy with the virulence of the disease. Otherwise we shall promote the plans of our great enemy by falling into a repining and censorious spirit; a state of mind which is equally injurious to ourselves and offensive to our heavenly Father.

VI.

It is a sign that our wills are not wholly lost in the will of God, when we are much in the habit of using words which imply election or choice; such as, I want this, or I want that; I hope it will be so and so, or I hope it will be otherwise. When our wills are lost in the will of God, all our specific choices and preferences

are merged in God's preference and choice. The soul truly loves the arrangements of God, whatever they may be. In regard to whatever is now, and whatever shall be hereafter, its language is, "Thy will be done."

VII.

A holy person often does the same things which are done by an unholy person, and yet the things done in the two cases, though the same in themselves, are infinitely different in their character. The one performs them in the will of God, the other in the will of the creature.

VIII.

The desires and affections should all converge and meet in the same centre, viz., in the love of God's will and glory. When this is the case, we experience true *simplicity* or *singleness of heart*. The opposite of this, viz., a mixed motive, partly from God and partly from the world, is what is described in the Scriptures as a double mind. The double minded man, or the man who is not in true simplicity of heart, walks in darkness and is unstable in all his ways. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

IX.

Confession of sin is an important duty ; but there is no true confession of sin where there is not at the same time a turning away from it.

X.

✂ When Satan cannot prevent our good deeds, he will sometimes effect his evil objects by inducing us to take an undue and selfish satisfaction in them. So that it is necessary, if we would not convert them into destructive poisons, to be crucified and dead even to our virtues.

XI.

No person can be considered as praying in sincerity for a specified object, who does not employ all the appropriate natural means which he can to secure the object.

XII.

The rays of the sun shine upon the dust and mud, but they are not soiled by them. So a holy soul, while it remains holy, may mingle with the vileness of the world, and yet be pure in itself.

XIII.

The decisions of the conscience are always based upon perceptions and acts of the judgment; consequently he who acts from mere desire, without any intervention and helps of the judgment, necessarily acts without the approbation of conscience; and may be said, therefore, in the moral sense of the terms, to act without God.

XIV.

God is perfectly tranquil. He is never subject to agitation in any case whatever. And unlikeness to him in this respect, except in what is instinctive and physically unavoidable, indicates the existing state of the mind to be in some respects wrong.

XV.

Two things, in particular, are to be guarded against in all the variety of their forms, viz., CREATURE LOVE and SELF WILL; in other words, dependence upon self, and dependence upon our fellow men.

XVI.

Some portions of the Bible are addressed to the intellect, and some to the heart. The parts addressed exclusively to the intellect, are always understood, where there are corresponding powers and exercises of intellect. The

parts addressed to the heart, and which involve truths having relation to the religious affections, can be fully understood only where there are corresponding exercises of the heart. And on this principle, the higher experimental truths of the Bible, such as relate to a full inward salvation, are not likely to be understood and appreciated, except in connection with the experience of such salvation.

XVII.

One of those things which particularly characterizes the holy mind, in distinction from the unholy or natural mind, and also in distinction from the partially sanctified mind, is, that in the allotment which falls to it in life, *it chooses to be, and loves to be where it is*; and has no disposition and no desire to be any where else, till the providence of God clearly indicates that the time has come for a removal.

XVIII.

Whenever we propose to change our situation in life, by establishing some new relations, or by entering into some new business, it becomes, first of all, a most important religious duty, to lay all our thoughts and plans before our Heavenly Father for his approbation. Otherwise it is possible, and even probable, that we shall be found running the immense risk of moving in our own wisdom and out of God's wisdom, in our own order and out of God's order, for our own ends and out of God's ends.

XIX.

It is good to take up and to bear the cross, whatever it may be, which God sees fit to impose. But it is not good and not safe to make crosses of our own; and, by an act of our own choice, to impose upon ourselves burdens

which God does not require, and does not authorize. Such a course always implies either a faith too weak or a will too strong; either a fear to trust God's way, or a desire to have our own way.

XX.

The more we are disunited from the unnecessary and tangling alliances of this life, the more fully and freely will our minds be directed to the life which is to come. The more we are separated from that which is temporal, the more closely shall we be allied to that which is eternal; the more we are disunited from the creatures, the more we shall be united to the Creator.

XXI.

Adversity, in the state of things in the present life, has far less danger for us than prosperity. Both, when received in the proper spirit, may tend to our spiritual advancement. But the tendency of adversity, in itself considered, is to show us our weakness, and to lead us to God; while the natural tendency of prosperity, separate from the correctives and the directions of divine grace, is to inspire us with self-confidence, and to turn us away from God.

XXII.

The goods of this world, those things which are suited to our convenience and comfort, are not necessarily unholy. Unholiness attaches to the manner; that is to say, to the spirit or temper, considered in relation to God, in which we receive and hold and employ them. If we receive and hold them as God's gifts, and in subordination to his will, they are good. But if we hold and employ them as our own possessions, and irrespective of God's will, they are evil.



DEC 11 1928

